



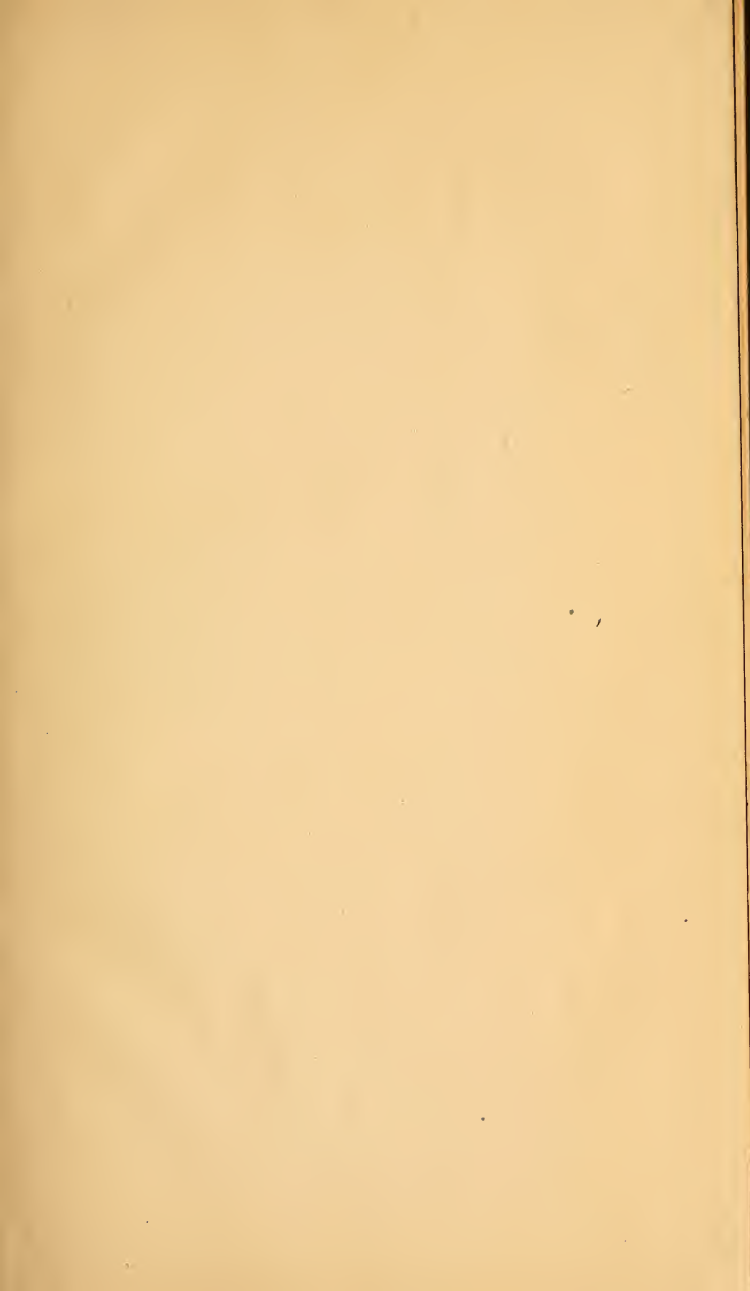


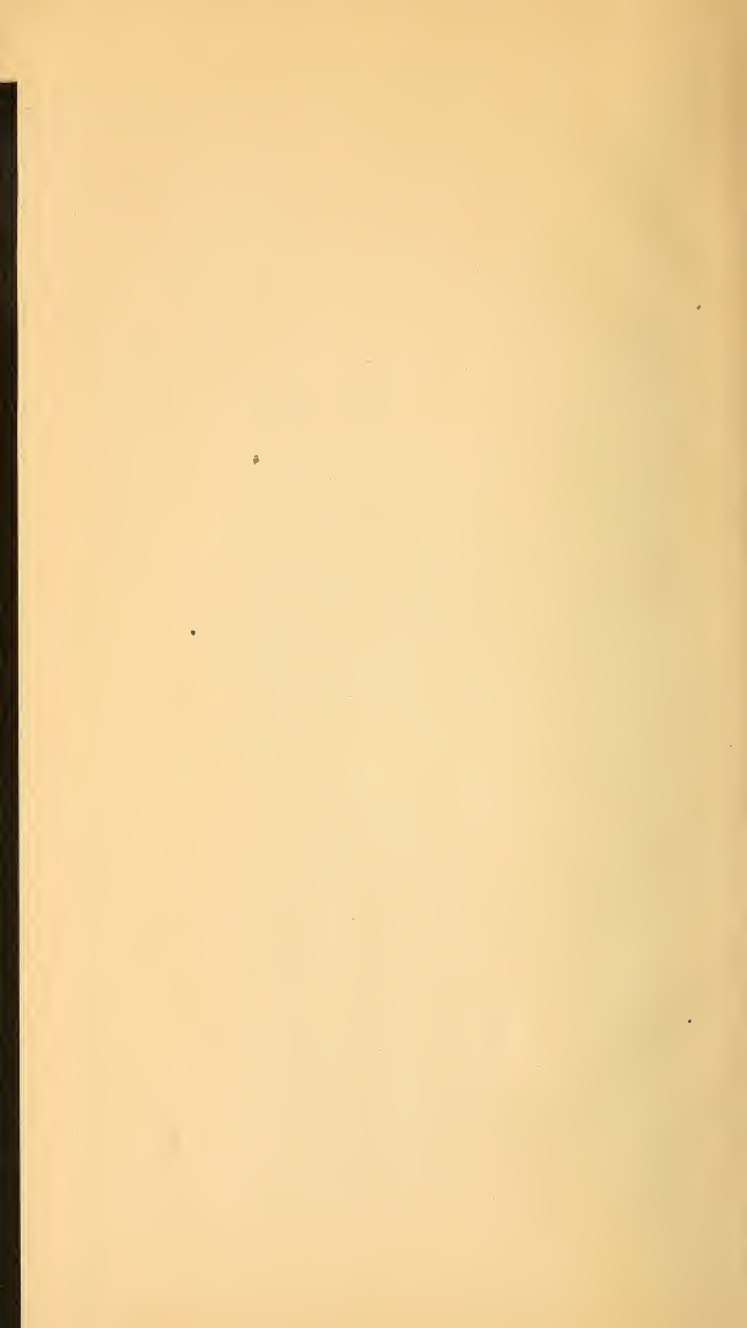
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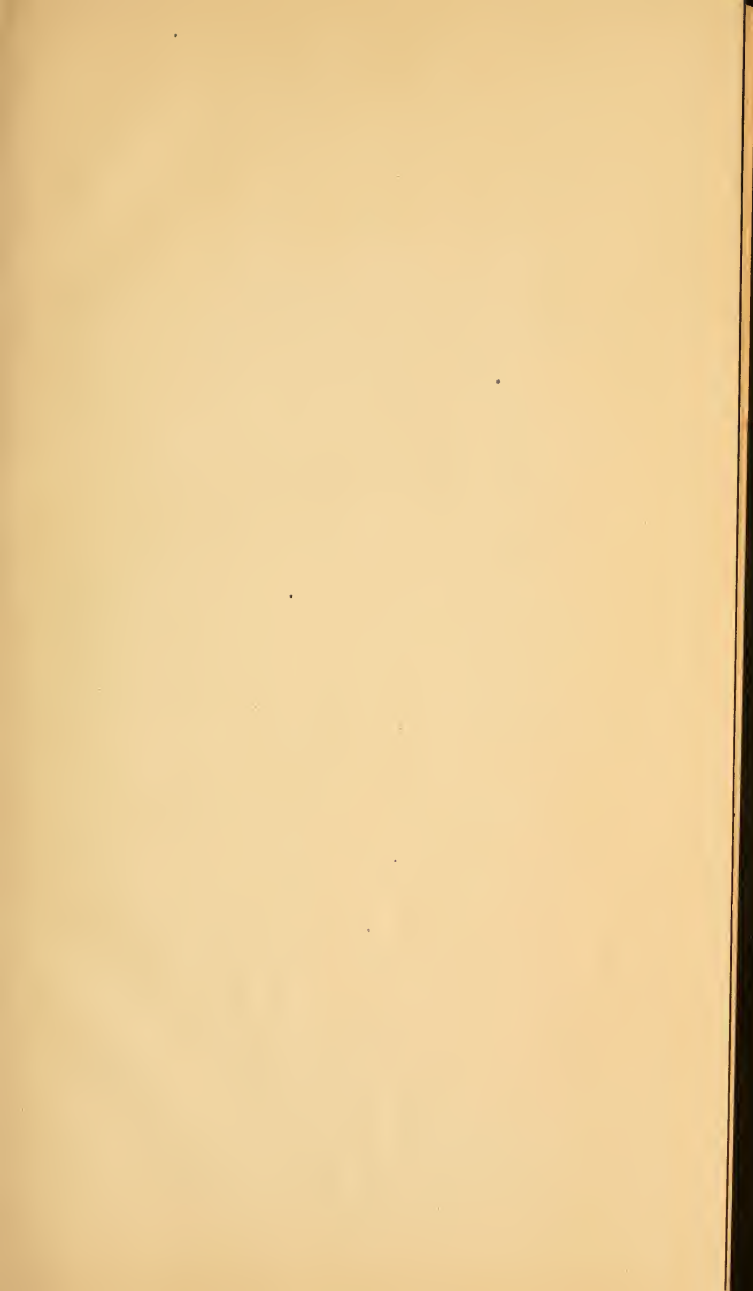
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COURSE XVIII  
Booklovers Reading Club  
Hand-Book

# THE GREATER VICTORIAN POETS

THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH

Professor T. R. LOUNSBURY

Professor T. M. PARROTT

MARIE ADA MOLINEUX

*And Others*



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# THE GREATER VICTORIAN POETS

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Course *XVIII*: Booklovers Reading Club

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BOOKS SELECTED

FOR THIS READING COURSE

*by*

MR. THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH







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# *T h e* B O O K S

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*THE following three books are supplied by  
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who have enrolled for Course XVIII.*

## *I. VICTORIAN POETS*

(Edmund Clarence Stedman)

## *II. THE POETRY OF TENNYSON*

(Henry van Dyke)

## *III. LIFE AND LETTERS OF ROBERT BROWNING*

(Mrs. Sutherland Orr)

*The course of reading as outlined in this handbook  
is based on these books. Suggestions for supplementary  
reading will be found at the end.*—————



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# THE GREATER VICTORIAN POETS

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## TALKS *and* LECTURES

*by*

THOMAS R. LOUNSBURY

*and*

THOMAS M. PARROTT

*and*

MARIE ADA MOLINEUX

*These papers by Professor Lounsbury, Professor  
Parrott and Miss Molineux have been prepared  
especially for readers of this course.*

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## EDITORIAL NOTES

*by*

Professor T. M. PARROTT

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## A WORD *from* THE DIRECTOR

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*WE offer our course on "The Greater Victorian Poets" just at the close of the Victorian age. It is notoriously unsafe to judge literary achievement at close range, but however radical may be the readjustment of relative values by posterity there is at present a very general agreement that the greatest poets of the period under consideration are the three treated in our course—Alfred Tennyson, Robert Browning, and Matthew Arnold.*

*The books which have been chosen for us by*

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## A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

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*Mr. Thomas Bailey Aldrich* comprise a general treatise on Victorian poetry, a critical study of the work of Tennyson, and a biography of Browning. *Mr. Stedman's* book, *The Victorian Poets*, is a rapid survey of the whole field by a critic of the highest standing. *Dr. Van Dyke's* critique, *The Poetry of Tennyson*, is the work of an ardent admirer who writes with the purpose of giving "some reasons for thinking that Tennyson stands among the great poets, if not on a level with the greatest." *Mrs. Orr's* book is of special value as the authorized biography of Browning.

The papers in the handbook deserve most careful reading. *Professor Lounsbury* is one of our foremost scholars in the field of English literature, and his review of early Victorian poetry is as authoritative as it is interesting. *Miss Molineux*, the editor of *A Phrase-Book of the Works of Robert Browning*, is an enthusiastic special student of the poet, and her presentation of his work is most sympathetic. The third and longest paper in the handbook was prepared to meet a special need which developed as we proceeded with the construction of our course. We found that only one of the books which *Mr. Aldrich* chose for us deals with *Matthew Arnold*, and that volume gives a comparatively brief



## A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

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*account of the life and work of one of the greatest of recent English poets. Professor Parrott has therefore contributed an admirable detailed study of Arnold which supplements very satisfactorily the inadequate treatment of Mr. Stedman's book. Through this paper our course attains its proper balance.*

*The handbook affords ample suggestion and careful guidance to those who wish to make a serious study of the poets and the poetry of the era under review. The topical outline, the stimulative questions, the lists of typical poems, the annotated bibliography, and the other suggestions to the reader are the work of a college professor of literature who is thoroughly skilled in the art of teaching a larger class than can be reached with the voice. The reader who avails himself of all the possibilities for study which Professor Parrott suggests will finish the course with a comprehensive and intimate knowledge of the greater Victorian poets.*



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## *The Idea of the Course*

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NO period in English literature appeals so directly to us as the age bearing the name of the great queen who has but recently passed away. We have grown up under its surrounding influence. Its poets, novelists, historians, and essayists were familiar names to our childhood ; they furnished in large part the mental stimulus and the spiritual guidance of our youth. There are, no doubt, greater names in English literature than any that the Victorian age can show. Yet just because that age lies so near to us and is, indeed, the immediate progenitor of our own civilization, culture, and religious attitude, its poets and thinkers are dearer to us and more sympathetic than the greater men of a more distant past.

For the Victorian era is already a past age. The death of the queen in February, 1901, did not so much close the age as proclaim to the world that it was past. For nearly two decades before her death the voices of the poets' chorus that had glorified her reign were one by one falling into silence. The death of Morris in 1896 seems, perhaps, to mark the true close of Victorian poetry. Swinburne, indeed, still lives, the sole survivor of those who once were called the

## THE BOOKLOVERS READING CLUB

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younger Victorian poets. But Swinburne, even in the judgment of his admirers, has outlived not only his age but his own period of true poetic creation.

We are coming, then, to a time when we can at least make the attempt to judge the Victorian poets with the impartial eyes of posterity. A certain distance from the object is necessary to give the proper sense of proportion, and as the Victorian age recedes into the background, we begin for the first time to realize its true place in the history of English literature and to perceive accurately the relative position which its great poets bear to each other and to their predecessors. The equally extravagant outbursts of insult and panegyric which greeted the earlier and the later poems of Browning have now become impossible. There seem to be plain signs of the diminution of that extraordinary influence which Tennyson once exerted alike upon poets and critics of poetry. On the other hand, as the din of the social and theological polemics into which Arnold flung himself dies away, his fame as a poet emerges with a clearer and more steadfast radiance. Perhaps it may be the chief literary business of the present age not so much to produce new work as to rejudge and properly appreciate the work of the age that has just closed.

The materials for this rejudgment and appre-

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## THE GREATER VICTORIAN POETS

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ciation are already at hand. During the last years of Victoria's reign there appeared an immense amount of biographical and critical literature dealing with the chief poets of her time. From this mass three volumes have been selected for the course here presented. No pretence is made that these books contain a final estimate of the poetic quality of the age as a whole or a definitive criticism of its chief poets. The time for such work had not yet arrived when these books were written. But the first gives us a general oversight of the period such as can be gained nowhere else; the second offers an enthusiastic appreciation of Tennyson which may serve at once as a corrective to the increasing tendency to depreciate that poet's work, and, in the minds of some readers at least, to provoke the question whether its sweeping eulogies will be echoed by posterity; while the third, with all its manifest shortcomings, remains the standard biography of Browning and is our chief, and often sole, authority for the facts of his life and the traits of his character.

It is with the hope, therefore, of stimulating a new appreciation of the greater Victorian poets that this course is presented to the public. The three books here offered are, of course, merely introductory; but material is also presented in the shape of critical comment, supplementary reading, lists of typical poems, stimulative ques-

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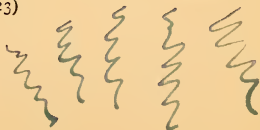
tions, and topics for papers and open discussion, which, if properly used, will furnish a foundation for an original, impartial, and relatively correct estimate of the chief figures in one of the most brilliant epochs in the history of English literature.



## HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS TO THE READER

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Mr. Stedman's *Victorian Poets*, written more than a quarter of a century ago and enlarged some twelve years later, is generally recognized in this country and in Great Britain as the best existing treatise on the subject. That it is not wholly satisfactory the author himself would be the first to admit. He has, indeed, in his "Supplementary Review," endeavored, in at least two cases, to correct and broaden a somewhat narrow or unsympathetic treatment. But even with this addition, scant justice is done to Matthew Arnold and to Rossetti. Toward Browning the critic seems to have experienced a change of heart between the time of the first appearance of the book and its revision in 1887. In consequence such a noble collection of poems as *Dramatis Personæ* is hastily dismissed as "for the greater part, ragged, uncouth, and even puerile," while the far inferior *Jocoseria* receives a flattering mention as composed of "brief and sturdy poems." Tennyson, on the other hand, is treated with a full and discerning criticism, and if he seems to fill some-



## THE BOOKLOVERS READING CLUB

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what too large a portion of the book, little else could be expected from a critic of his own day who had grown up under the spell of his art and fame.

In fact, the defects of the work as a whole spring from one inevitable cause. In 1875, or even in 1887, it was still impossible to form a correct estimate of the Victorian age as a whole, or of the proper relation of its great poets to each other. And it must be said, too, that Mr. Stedman's interest lies rather in the poet's expression than in his conception ; he deals with form rather than with thought. Yet when all this is said, his work remains a singularly valuable piece of criticism, always urbane, generally sympathetic, dominated by high artistic ideals, and full of poetic appreciation. No other work gives at once so broad a view of the whole field and so detailed a study of its principal features. The student who prefers to concentrate his attention on these latter should read with particular attention chapters I, III, v, VI, IX ; section III of chapter x ; and that portion of the "Supplementary Review" which deals with Tennyson, Browning, and Arnold. Readers who prefer to study the whole work with equal attention should supplement this book by Mr. Stedman's *Victorian Anthology* or Palgrave's *Golden Treasury of Songs*, second series, both of which contain a good selection from the minor poets of the era.



## THE GREATER VICTORIAN POETS

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Dr. Van Dyke calls his book *The Poetry of Tennyson*, "a study of the growth of a poet's mind and of the perfecting of his art." There can be no doubt that this method—the evolutionary method, as it is sometimes called—is one of the most profitable ways of approaching a great poet. Particularly is this so in the case of Tennyson, whose long life and steady growth set a vast distance in art and thought between the immature productions of his youth and the ripe fruit of his old age. In reading this book for the first time the intercalary chapters on "Milton and Tennyson" and "The Bible in Tennyson" may well be omitted, so as to concentrate attention on the development of the poet.

One of the chief merits of this book is the way in which it calls attention alike to the poet's message and to its artistic presentment. "Art for art's sake" has never been a received doctrine in the world of English letters, and although English poetry may have suffered by an occasional intrusion of didacticism, the loss has been more than recompensed by its moral dignity and permanent ethical value. It is impossible to estimate the work of any great English poet from the esthetic side alone. On the other hand, too many modern critics are inclined to neglect altogether the form and artistic merit of the poet and to lay stress solely upon his ideas and teachings. This is notably the case with much of the so-called litera-

## THE BOOKLOVERS READING CLUB

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ture of exposition that has gathered round the name of Browning. Dr. Van Dyke happily avoids both of these extremes.

The book is distinctly subjective in tone. As the author points out in his interesting preface, it is the work of one who has grown up from early childhood under the strong and abiding influence of the poet whose work it discusses. It is apparent that such a treatment cannot claim to be an impartial or final estimate of the poet. The author is rather Tennyson's advocate than his judge. But this form of criticism, the expository form, has its recognized place in critical literature, and in so far as, in the author's words, it "leads or drives men to read a great poet, it has served its purpose in the order of the universe."

Mrs. Sutherland Orr's book, *The Life and Letters of Robert Browning*, is far from being a satisfactory biography. It is patchy and scrappy, disproportioned in matter and unpleasing in tone. It lays more stress upon the incident that in a certain autumn Browning found it necessary to change his quarters from one French village to another, or upon the petty fact that in several editions the name "Karshook" stood where "Karshish" now appears in *One Word More*, than on such weightier matters as the development of the poet's mind and art, the causes for his long neglect and sudden appreciation by the public, and his

## THE GREATER VICTORIAN POETS

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relation to the great intellectual and moral problems of his time. Reasons for this lack of proportion may doubtless be found. Mrs. Orr professedly does not believe in the development of Browning's poetic genius ; as a leading light in the first Browning Society she may possibly be indifferent to the public attitude toward a poet whom the members of that society strove to make the idol of an intense and narrow cult, and her tone in her occasional references to Browning's religious opinions as expressed in his work is one of such offensive patronage as could only be adopted by a New Woman toward a man unfortunate enough in her eyes to have a sentimental weakness for an "old world religion." Yet with all its faults, the book is, for our present purpose, the best biography of Browning. It is the only authorized account of his life ; it contains a number of his letters that are nowhere else to be found ; and the account of his boyhood and youth is based upon the recollections of his sister. It is, in short, a storehouse of information in regard to the facts of the poet's life ; and some of its numerous anecdotes contribute distinctly toward a clearer and firmer conception of the poet's personality than the author herself seems to have attained.

The student should read this book, then, for facts and impressions. Its critical utterances may be set aside without any loss whatever. But in Browning's case, far more than in that of most

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## THE BOOKLOVERS READING CLUB

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English poets, the value of the work depends, for the general reader, upon his knowledge of the poet's personality and character. For Browning is, first of all, a thinker, a preacher of ideas and ideals, a champion of causes ; and unless we feel that his utterances were the sincere expression of his own beliefs, his championship the hearty advocacy of causes that lay near his own heart, our interest in the substance of his work vanishes and we are thrown back upon the esthetic enjoyment of his form. Now, although Browning's formal or esthetic merits are at once great and strangely neglected by the majority of his critics, yet they are not enough of themselves to recommend him to the great mass of readers. It is evident, therefore, that in order to do justice to Browning the poet, we must know something of Browning the man. And in default of a biography at once as full and more sympathetic, we are compelled to fall back upon this book of Mrs. Orr's.

The papers printed in this pamphlet are meant to supplement the books of the course. Professor Lounsbury gives a capital view of the conditions of English poetry during the time in which the greater Victorian poets slowly rose to prominence ; Miss Molineux presents an enthusiastic appreciation of Browning ; and the paper on Arnold attempts to present an estimate of a poet

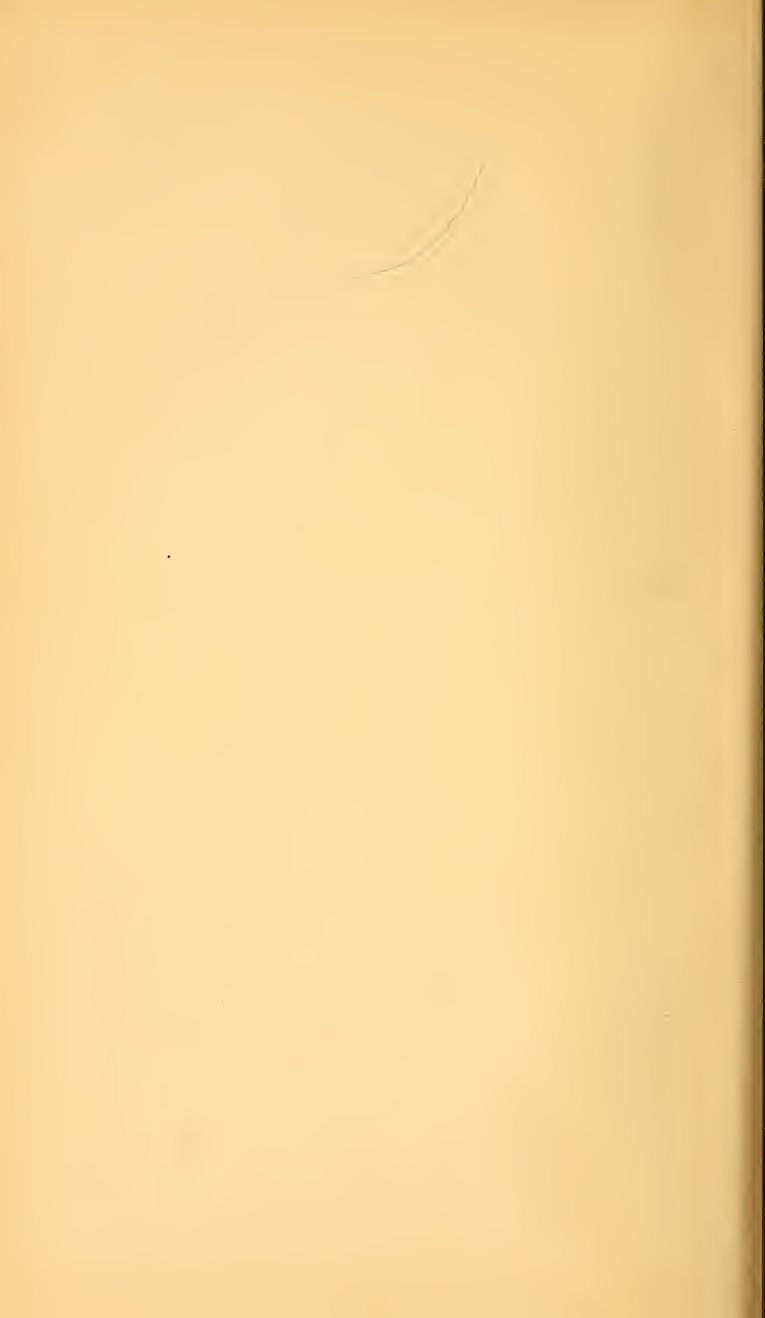
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## THE GREATER VICTORIAN POETS

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who is somewhat slightly passed over in Mr. Stedman's book, and of whose life and work no satisfactory account as yet exists.

Special attention is called to the lists of typical poems printed on pages 127-130 of the handbook. So far as is possible all the poems referred to in the books of the course should be read. But in addition to this the student will find it extremely profitable to read in their order all the poems named in these lists. By this means he will obtain as in no other fashion a view of the growth, development, and cardinal characteristics of each of the three great Victorian poets.



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# The Course Arranged by Topics: Part I. *Victorian Poets* by EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN

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1. General Characteristics of the Period. Influence of environment; culture and spontaneity. Twofold duty of the critic. Science and poetry; their temporary antagonism and approaching harmony. Restrictions set by the age to poetic expression; their results on poetic form. 1-32
2. Walter Savage Landor. The pioneer of Victorian poetry. Intellectual quality of his work. Order of his works. Artistic perfection; lyric abundance; dramatic bent; limitations. His prose works, their poetic qualities. His personality. 33-72
3. Hood, Arnold, and Procter; the Poets of the Crowd, the Closet, and the Open Air. HOOD: humor, sympathy, general characteristics. ARNOLD: intellectual qualities, mental attitude, limitations. PROCTER (Barry Cornwall): spontaneity of song, dramatic faculty, lyrical variety. 72-113

4. Mrs. Browning, the Chief of Woman Poets. Early studies. First poems, their defects and merits. Married life and mature power. Last poems. Estimate of her genius ; imperfections, sympathetic quality, subjective tone. Representative position. 114-149
  
  5. Tennyson, the Representative Poet of His Time. Beginnings ; poetic growth. *Poems* of 1842 ; their comprehensive range. *The Princess*. *In Memoriam*. Occasional verse as laureate. *Maud*, its unequal merit. *The Idyls of the King*, his masterwork. *Enoch Arden*. Characteristics of his genius ; synthetic perfection, technical excellence, idyllic mode. Limitations, mannerism, lack of dramatic gift. Tone of mind, liberal conservatism. Tennyson and Byron. Tennyson and Theocritus, similarity between their eras, points of likeness in their work. 150-233
  
  6. Minor Poets. State of poetry at the opening of the era. Influence of Wordsworth. The meditative school. Independent poets. Song writers. The spasmodic school. Later poets. Influence of Tennyson. Prevalence of the idyl ; *vers de société* ; translations ; hymns ; dialect poems. Woman poets. Latest schools. Influence of Browning and Rossetti.
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## THE GREATER VICTORIAN POETS

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General survey. Tone and manner of the minor poets. Outlook for the future. 234-292

7. **Robert Browning.** Dramatic genius; subjectivity. His special field. His method, its shortcomings. Natural gifts. Evils of his style. The succession of early works (1835-1846). Dramatic lyrics, dramatic studies. His most representative volume; its defects and merits. Moral quality of verse; its main lesson. Later poems (1864-1875). Estimate of his genius; originality and lawlessness. 293-341

8. **The Movement toward New Poetic Forms.** BUCHANAN: influence of Wordsworth; Scotch idyls and London poems; metaphysical verse; versatility. ROSSETTI: his influence; translations and original verse; diction and style; love of beauty; ballads, lyrics, and sonnets; range and quality of verse. MORRIS: an artist of the beautiful; ballad-romances, narrative poems; their merits; moral defects. SWINBURNE: the master of rhythm; mastery of poetical technique; faults of excess; early dramas. *Atalanta in Calydon*, its place in English literature. *Poems and Ballads*, moral questions raised by their appearance; influences at work on his genius; elegiac poems; revolutionary poems; dramatic works.

342-414

9. A Supplementary Review. Enlarged and corrected judgments. TENNYSON: dramatic efforts ; later lyrics. BROWNING: later works (1875-1887) ; use of rime, involved style, dramatic psychology ; relation to his time. SWINBURNE: later lyrics and dramas. DEAD POETS: Rossetti, Horne, and others. LIVING POETS: Arnold, Morris, and others. NEW POETS: Symonds, Edwin Arnold, Austin, Lewis Morris, and others. THE FIELD: Gosse, Mackay, Michael Field, Robert Bridges, Oscar Wilde. SOCIETY VERSE: Dobson and Lang. THE OUTLOOK: technical finish ; limited inspiration ; lack of a national style.

415-483

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# The Course Arranged by Topics: Part II. *The Poetry of Tennyson* by HENRY VAN DYKE

---

1. Early Poetry. *Poems by Two Brothers*; characteristics; influence of Byron. *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical* (1830), *Poems by Alfred Tennyson* (1832), *Poems* (1842); their reception by the critics. *The Palace of Art*; its first and last forms; moral of the poem. 3-46
2. Milton and Tennyson. Tennyson's references to Milton; points of resemblance in their early lives and early poems; their conception of marriage; their love of country. *Paradise Lost* and *The Idyls of the King*; *Paradise Lost* and *In Memoriam*. 49-107
3. Poems of Middle Life. *The Princess*: defects and merits. *Maud*: dramatic quality. *In Memoriam*: twofold character; Arthur Henry Hallam; analysis of the poem. 111-151
4. Idyls of the King. Order of composition; significance of title; unity of the series. The Arthurian legend; Malory's *Morte*

## THE BOOKLOVERS READING CLUB

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- d'Arthur*; use of this material. Modern spirit of the poems; its justification. Style; allegoric and parabolic elements; the dominant idea and its elaboration. Cardinal defect. Great truths embraced in the poems. 155-217
5. **Historic Plays.** Minor plays. Tennyson's plays as closet dramas. Purpose of the plays. *Harold, Becket, Queen Mary.* 221-242.
6. **The Bible in Tennyson.** Influence of the Bible upon the English language; upon Tennyson's work. Biblical quotations, scenes, and characters in Tennyson; harmony of Tennyson's religious conceptions with biblical doctrine. 243-276
7. **Last Poems.** *Locksley Hall Sixty Years After*; its relation to the first *Locksley Hall*. *Demeter, and Other Poems.* Special qualities exhibited. *The Death of Ænone, Akbar's Dream and Other Poems*; relative value of this volume; subjects treated. 279-301
8. **Suggestions for the Study of Tennyson.** Classification; its value. Suggested arrangement and order of reading. Conclusion. 305-344
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# The Course Arranged by Topics: Part III. *Life and Letters of Robert Browning* by MRS. SUTHERLAND ORR

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1. Ancestry and Early Days. The Browning family. The poet's mother, his childhood, school days. Earliest poems. Influence of Shelley. Choice of poetry as a calling.  
1-75
2. Early Poems and First Drama. *Pauline*: its poetic qualities, reception by critics. *Paracelsus*: origin of the poem; aim of the poet; poetic qualities; reception by the literary world. Social recognition. *Strafford*: Browning and Macready; composition and performance of the play; limited success.  
76-136
3. *Sordello* and *Bells and Pomegranates*. *Sordello*: Period of preparation; its inspiration; its character and style. *Bells and Pomegranates*: form in which the series appeared; meaning of title. *A Blot in the 'Scutcheon*: first performance. Other plays and poems of the series.  
137-200

4. **Courtship and Early Married Life.** Acquaintance with Miss Barrett. Secret marriage; reasons for this step. Life in Italy. Birth of Browning's son and death of his mother. Life and friends in Paris. 201-259
5. **Renewed Poetic Activity and Last Years of Married Life.** New edition of the early poems. *Christmas-Eve and Easter-Day*; religious tone of these poems. Essay on Shelley. *Men and Women*, an omitted poem. The Browning child. Spiritualism. Illness and death of Mrs. Browning. 260-356
6. **Middle Life.** The great sorrow. Removal to London. Growing fame. *The Ring and the Book*; its conception; its reception. The character of Pompilia. *Fifine at the Fair*. *Red Cotton Nightcap Country*. London life. Love of music. *Aristophanes' Apology*. Growing love of nature. *La Saisiaz*; its occasion, its relation to Christian doctrine. 357-466
7. **Later Life and Work.** Return to Italy; Asolo and Venice. *Dramatic Idyls*. New departure in his poetic method. The Browning Society, Browning's relation to it, its influence on the public. Loss of friends. *Parleyings*. 467-533

8. Personal Characteristics ; Last Years and Death. Browning's strength of affection, optimism, subjective character of mind, religious and poetical opinions. Browning's attitude toward the public ; toward his own work. Browning as a talker, his nervous temperament, benevolence, attitude toward women. Life in London and Italy ; Asolo ; last days in Venice. Death and burial. Browning's message.
- 534-634





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POETRY *in the* EARLY  
VICTORIAN ERA:  
*A Review by* T. R. LOUNSBURY

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# POETRY *in the* EARLY VICTORIAN ERA: *A Review* by T. R. LOUNSBURY

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Thomas Raynesford Lounsbury, professor of English in Yale since 1871, was graduated from that University in 1859. His literary labors began almost immediately after with work on Appleton's *American Cyclopaedia*. At the end of two years he enlisted in the army. It was during his military service in the Civil War that he began to study Anglo-Saxon, to which he devoted several years after the close of the Rebellion. His *History of the English Language*, the first edition of which appeared in 1879, has been adopted as a text-book in many colleges. He has edited Chaucer's *Parlament of Foules* and written the *Life of James Fenimore Cooper* in the American Men of Letters series. *Studies in Chaucer*, in three volumes, is generally considered his masterpiece. A volume entitled *Shakespeare as a Dramatic Artist* has been issued as one of the bi-centennial publications of Yale University, the first of a series which, under the general title of *Shakespearian Wars*, will give an account of the controversies in regard to the dramatist.

**T**he Victorian era, strictly so-called, begins with the accession to the throne, in 1837, of the queen from whom it derives its name. In reality it begins seven years before, with the death of George IV. in 1830. This last-named date makes a sufficiently marked dividing line between the old and the new, between the literary spirit which was going out and that which was coming in.

## THE BOOKLOVERS READING CLUB

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"Never," said Schiller, "come the immortals alone." One fact which stands out strikingly in the history of literature is that the great writers come not singly, but in groups. Even if some one of them should be universally recognized as distinctly preëminent, he is almost invariably attended by a body of associates, not attaining his rank, to be sure, but each one of whom may surpass him in particular respects. There are exceptions to this rule. There are instances of men standing out alone in their age and country. But the exceptions are not frequent. It is not often that a solitary voice is recognized in any period as being apart from and above those of all its fellows, as happened in the case of Milton in the middle of the seventeenth century.

For anything resembling the intellectual display which was witnessed during the last half of the reign of George III. we must go back to the time of Elizabeth. Its coming had been foreshadowed by the appearance of Cowper ; it had made a most impressive manifestation of itself in the sudden leap into fame of a Scottish peasant ; but it reached its highest splendor in the nearly simultaneous appearance of writers such as Scott, Wordsworth, and Coleridge, to be speedily followed by Byron, Shelley, and Keats. These are but a few of the names which could be cited. Yet alongside of them and their work the productions of the much-lauded age of Queen Anne sink into comparative

## THE GREATER VICTORIAN POETS

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obscurity. It is certainly to be reckoned a wonderful era in the literary annals of any country when authors of the genius of Campbell, Moore, Leigh Hunt, Landor, Crabbe, and a host of others must be accorded only a second place.

By 1830 this great intellectual outburst had spent its force. The men who had created it were either dead or apparently burnt out. If they continued to produce, what they wrote might have just as well, in most instances, been left unwritten. Three of the greatest poets of the Georgian era—Byron, Shelley, and Keats—had died in the flower of youth. Scott, though not really an old man, had entered into the valley of the shadow of death. Coleridge was moralizing and monologuizing in the villa at Highgate. Moore, Campbell, Wordsworth, and others continued still to write poetry occasionally, but the verse they produced lacked spontaneity and distinction. In general, too, they betook themselves to the humbler work of prose.

To take the place of these veterans no one was apparently coming forward. So at least it seemed to the critics of those days. The periodical literature immediately preceding and following the accession to the throne of Queen Victoria is full of dolorous lamentations in reference to the decay which had overtaken poetry. Prophecies of its ultimate disappearance are constantly indulged in. Science, we are told, has usurped its place,

## THE BOOKLOVERS READING CLUB

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and the attractions which its revelations afford to readers will henceforth displace all the interest which men have hitherto felt in the world of spirit. It is the old story in the history of literature that is here repeated, the old opinions and sayings that are again revived and set a-going. In the interval that elapses between the passing away of one literary movement and the coming in of its successor there is regularly the complaint that the efforts of the human mind have been exhausted; henceforth we are to look forward to an age of prose; facts are to take the place of the creations of the imagination, positive knowledge that of inspiration.

No one who familiarizes himself with the critical writings of the two decades from 1830 to 1850 can fail to be struck by the hopeless view taken of the present condition and future prospects of creative literature. All the leading periodicals of the time, with the quarterlies at their head, express the same despondent feelings. There was, or at least there seemed to be, for it a certain justification. Everybody appeared to have lost the interest in poetry which earlier in the century had been general. In the case of new authors, publishers were unwilling to bring out at their own expense volumes containing it. Even when they did this for writers who had already attained celebrity, they lost by the venture. At any rate, they said so, and this, so far as the author

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was concerned, amounted to the same thing. Wordsworth explained this decay of interest as being due to over-production. Whatever the cause, there could be no doubt of the fact. The most successful poem of the third decade of the nineteenth century, so far as that was indicated by the literary distinction it conferred, was the drama of *Philip Van Artevelde*. It was brought out by its author, Henry Taylor, at his own expense, and though its limited number of copies was speedily disposed of, his publisher, for all that, seems to have been successful in bringing him into debt. Browning's relatives bore the expense of his early publications. Moxon told him in 1835 that Tennyson's poetry had a good deal of repute at Cambridge, but still of the volume of 1833 he had sold but three hundred copies. In truth, no poetical work of that time was expected to pay for the cost of its production.

Not only were the men of that time despondent about the future of poetry, they felt that they had the fullest right to be despondent from the character of the productions which appeared. Nearly all the surviving representatives of the older school of critics honestly believed that there were few, if any, signs of promise to be observed, at least of poetic promise. In this, too, they repeated the experience of other periods. They not merely failed to see any new luminary rising above the horizon, they were incapable of recognizing it

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after it had risen. The fact in itself is not surprising. It is always a difficult, and in some cases an impossible, thing for men who have been trained in one set of literary traditions to have much sympathy with, or genuine appreciation of, works in which new methods of art have been practiced and through which an essentially different spirit breathes. The followers of Dryden and Pope could not recognize the new element which had been brought into literature by Wordsworth. They were still more revolted by that of Shelley and Keats, though they had been swept along, as was every one, by the irresistible energy which Byron had imparted to English verse. A corresponding state of mind showed itself in the early years of the Victorian era. The men who had been brought up on the literature which had passed away could not discern much, if anything, that was attractive in that which was coming in. Here two or three men who sang a new tune had shown themselves. It was not necessarily better or worse than that to which they had been accustomed, but it was different. It did not appeal to them. Sometimes they expressed their disapproval of it loudly. More frequently they ignored it altogether.

Of the depth of this feeling and of the lateness of the time to which it lasted we can get some conception from the opinion expressed by Macaulay in a letter written to his friend, Ellis, under



date of March 9, 1850. "It is odd," he said, "that the last twenty-five years—which have witnessed the greatest progress ever made in physical science, the greatest victories ever achieved by man over matter—should have produced hardly a volume that will be remembered in 1900." Let us say nothing of his own writings, which in secret he doubtless excepted from this sweeping prophecy. Nor let us say anything of his fellow essayist and historian, Carlyle. Let us keep silence, too, about the productions of the two most famous novelists of the middle of the century, several of whose finest works had already appeared before 1850, not to speak of writers below the grade of the very highest whose books continue still to be published and republished, to be read and re-read. It is Macaulay's ignorance of the two greatest of his poetical contemporaries which impresses us. At that period, to be sure, the reputation of one was limited to a very small circle, but that of the other had at last attained general recognition. Yet the most omnivorous reader of his time knew nothing about either, or else had no conception whatever of the greatness of their genius. Certainly among the host of unfulfilled predictions with which literary history abounds, this prophecy about the year 1900 is worthy of the highest place.

Tennyson and Browning were the two greatest poets of the early Victorian era, and such they

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remained until its end; but both had to make their way against studied depreciation of their work, entertained and expressed by most critics of the old school. It was very slowly that they came to be recognized and acknowledged save by a comparatively insignificant number. A different view has sometimes been taken of the success of Tennyson, but it is unfounded. A great deal of praise, no doubt, welcomed his first volume of 1830, but the immensely superior contents of his next venture, the volume of 1833, were received coldly and in most instances depreciatingly. The satirical but inconceivably fatuous review which Lockhart published of that work in the April *Quarterly* of that year was the final stroke which practically shut off for a whole decade all disposition on the part of Tennyson to publish. The two pieces that appeared in the interval were wrung from him rather than contributed. We know now with what dubious feelings the volumes of 1842 were sent to the press, what little hope of success was entertained from them either by the poet himself or by his friends. In fact it is doubtful if even at that time they would have been brought out, had not the intimation been distinctly conveyed to the author that his two previous volumes would be reprinted in their entirety in America, with or without his consent. As such a republication would include many pieces which he was anxious to have forgotten, he was fairly forced to

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take some action to avert the blow. The book pirate is not an estimable or a lovely character, but there are occasions when he has served a useful purpose.

The volumes of 1842 lifted Tennyson into prominence at once. They placed him in a few years at the head of living English poets. But it is an error to assume that this position was speedily attained or that there were not many to dispute his claims to consideration. In general it may be said that no author of the Victorian era owed less to professional critics than he. In his case they followed public opinion, they never led it. This was true of his later as well as his earlier volumes. The critic either lagged behind the reader in appreciation or condemned at the outset what he was subsequently forced to approve. The magnificent *Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington* was received at first with an almost unanimous shout of depreciation. Poems in the volumes of 1842 had become the favorites of the public long before the tardy recognition of their merit was found in the principal critical periodicals. With the exception of a review by John Forster in the *Examiner*, three months elapsed before they were noticed in the leading literary weeklies. The articles which appeared in the three quarterlies, though written by personal friends, were in no instance enthusiastic. They were, perhaps, not allowed to be ; this was true of

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at least one of them. Successful, too, as the work was in extending Tennyson's reputation, a year passed before a second edition of it was called for.

Furthermore, the general acceptance of his poetry by the public did not cause the critics of the old school to cease from their hostility. The veteran John Wilson Croker was honestly indignant that John Sterling had been allowed to contribute to the *Quarterly* his utterly inadequate and far from enthusiastic review of the volumes of 1842. We all know of the attack made upon "school miss Alfred" as late as 1846 by Bulwer in the early editions of *The New Timon*, and the sledge-hammer blows with which the "school miss," under the signature of Alcibiades, demolished the novelist in the pages of *Punch*. The speedy omission of the abusive passages from the further editions of Bulwer's poem showed that Tennyson had then attained a popularity which it was no longer safe for a man, even writing anonymously, to assail. Yet ignorance often prevailed where hostility did not. The words of Macaulay have already been given. Another prominent scholar of the time, George Cornewall Lewis, was not only himself a highly educated man, but spent his life largely with men eminent in literature. Yet when the laureateship became vacant by the death of Wordsworth in 1850, he suggested to the head of the ministry, to which he

belonged, that the place should be offered to the author of *Philip Van Artevelde*. He was exceedingly surprised to hear that Tennyson was under consideration, as he conceived that he was an author but little known and that his claims would not be generally recognized.

The general recognition of Browning's greatness came, as we all know, much later. It must be admitted, however, that it was largely his own fault. Browning seems to have been born with a congenital incapacity to put himself in the position of his reader, and this natural inability was increased rather than diminished by the desultory education he received. He could never be made to appreciate the difficulties he created, and honestly attributed to unwillingness to put forth the requisite exertion what was really owing to his habit of imposing upon those seeking acquaintance with his writings a burden which they should not have been expected to bear. Naturally, he paid the penalty for this course. In his later life he was inclined to exult over the fact that his first published work had not sold a single copy. But there is no question, whatever he may have been disposed to think afterward, that his second work, *Paracelsus*, which came out in 1835, awakened the highest hopes for his future. It did not meet, to be sure, with a large sale; but at that time no poetry of a high order met with a large sale. On the other hand, it made a profound impression

upon the minds of many whose appreciation was itself an earnest of fame. All these anticipations were sensibly lowered by the appearance of *Strafford*; for most men they were completely destroyed by the publication in 1840 of *Sordello*. Not even his warm friend and ardent advocate, John Forster, felt himself able to review that work. It has been reserved for the later disciples of the poet to find it particularly enjoyable, and to look with pitying and patronizing eyes upon the inferior intellects which have found its meaning escape their grasp.

The havoc which *Sordello* wrought with Browning's reputation is indicated by the fate which befell the series of volumes bearing the general title of *Bells and Pomegranates*. They were eight in number. The first, containing *Pippa Passes*, came out in 1841; the last, which contained *Luria*, and one of his most striking pieces, *A Soul's Tragedy*, appeared in 1846. These successive volumes naturally vary in excellence as they do in character, but as a whole they present some of the finest poetic achievement of the Victorian era. Many of the pieces found in them now form part of the literary treasures of every educated man. It seems almost incredible that some of these volumes should not have created something of a sensation at their first appearance. But *Sordello* had done its work. Men refused to look at anything which Browning wrote. During

the successive years that the volumes of this series passed through the press, hardly any notices of them can be found in the critical literature of the time. The few that appeared were almost invariably brief and often of a purely perfunctory character. It was not hostile comment the poems excited; there was scarcely any comment at all. The indifference of the critics was shared by the general public. The successive parts of *Bells and Pomegranates*, though brought out in a cheap form, met with but little sale.

Still to those who study carefully the literary history of the early Victorian era, it is plain that the unwarranted and fairly scandalous neglect which Browning's poetry at one time received was in a measure his own work. This may not excuse it, but it explains it. The fortunes of the husband are all the more noticeable when contrasted with those of the woman who became his wife. In 1844 the limited reputation which Miss Barrett had been enjoying was at once broadened and deepened by the publication of her two volumes of poems. Henceforth until her death she had a place in public estimation second only to that of Tennyson. During all that period she was regarded by the great mass of readers—of cultivated readers, be it remembered—as altogether superior to her husband. No one outside of a limited circle ever thought then of questioning it. Mrs. Browning is now as unduly underrated as

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she was then unduly exalted. Her defects are much more insisted upon than her very positive merits. It seems strange that there ever could have been a time when she was rated higher than her husband. Yet this state of things not only existed, it lasted from her marriage, in 1846, until her death, in 1861.

Finally, it may be added that the most successful poetry of the early Victorian era, as measured by its sale, was of a moral and religious type. Pollok's *The Course of Time*, first published in 1827, continued to be its favorite epic. Even to this day it occasionally serves a useful purpose in furnishing a text-book for parsing. Far the most popular poet of the fourth decade of the nineteenth century, so far as indicated by the circulation of his works, was Robert Montgomery. We know of him now only from the critique of Macaulay. This is often spoken of as having crushed the writer. It did nothing of the sort. The poem attacked ran through edition after edition the very year in which the criticism appeared; and like good fortune attended all his publications for several years after, until he of his own accord relinquished poetry for the pulpit. It was no system of puffing, as Macaulay asserted, which suddenly lifted the natural son of a circus clown into prominence and sold by thousands poems brought out by a somewhat obscure publisher. It was simply a fondness for religious sentiment and cheap



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morality, sugar-coated by a sort of poetry which rimed and rattled easily. A not essentially dissimilar result was attained a little later by Tupper in consequence of putting thoughts and feelings of the same nature into a new and striking form. The first part of that author's *Proverbial Philosophy* appeared in 1838, and during the years that followed countless editions of it were sold. Pollok, Robert Montgomery, and Tupper, if we look merely at the statistics of sale, easily surpassed in popularity all other poets of the early Victorian era, though one of them had died before it opened. Unfortunately for them all, it was not popularity with the right sort of persons.

D. R. Montgomery



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ROBERT BROWNING:

*A Talk* by MARIE ADA MOLINEUX

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# ROBERT BROWNING:

*A Talk by* MARIE ADA MOLINEUX

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Although a native of California, Marie Ada Molineux has been a resident of Boston since early childhood. She is a graduate of Boston University, and has received the degree of Ph.D. from that institution. Miss Molineux is a lecturer on psychology, but her best known work has been along the lines of English literature. For several years she was secretary of the Browning Society of Boston, and she has lectured extensively to clubs and schools upon Browning's poetry, some of which she has set to music. In 1896 she published *A Phrase Book from the Poetic and Dramatic Works of Robert Browning*, a work which has commended itself favorably to students of the poet.

**A**mong Victorian poets, indeed among all English poets, a unique position is held by Robert Browning, for no other during his own lifetime has been the source of a cult and of literary societies and coteries gathered in both hemispheres for the exclusive study of his works. Only one other, Shakespeare, is comparable with Browning in this regard, and in Shakespeare's case, the study clubs and the publications appeared long after his death. Each of these two poets represents the salient features of a long reign of a royal woman, Shakespeare dealing with a certain simplicity of life, Browning with the

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complexity of the wonderful nineteenth century ; both depicting with most marvelous elaboration, yet often in slight sketches, the same inexhaustible subject, the human soul.

What a man sets himself to do, the ideal he places before himself, must be the criterion of any judgment as to his work. No justice could be meted otherwise. Some strive to reach the goal of the great in the past, some start on new lines. Browning wrote and strove with no vision before him save that embodied in his own standard, and by that aim only is it fair to measure ; as he failed or succeeded in what he planned to do, as he was steadfast or weak in adherence to that ideal, so we judge him. Tried by this test he rises to the heights.

Browning's verse, his metres and their modifications, his frequent quaintness and peculiarities, all show adaptation to the particular purpose in view. It is most interesting to notice, as many have done after long attention and minute examination, how fitted in each case the quality of the versification is to the subject, the speaker, the moment, the surroundings, combining all in one harmonious whole. This is particularly to be noticed in *The Ring and the Book*, where the form is in each section perfectly suited to the feeling, the character, and the circumstances of the speaker—man or woman. Extracts from certain poems are often forcibly torn out and held up as

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examples of coarseness or oddity, that, when read with their contexts, are seen to be suited to the plan of the whole. Caliban, a persecuted Jew, a classical scholar, and a young girl would not use the same language. It may be said that Browning's verse, just because of its apparent waywardness and strangeness, better reflects the wayward peculiarities of his subject, the soul of man. The dark, fantastic, tortuous, sudden, sweet, harsh, cowardly, noble moments of that mystery he helps to solve for us are mirrored in turn in his flexible rhythms.

Browning, of all the poets of his day, possessed in most marvelous degree the subtle power of penetrating, ranging, exploring to the uttermost the complex minds of men ; of catching the twists, the turns, the unexpected moral, unmoral, immoral windings of intellect and heart, and of picturing the certain results. He shows the stern law of cause and effect ; he places before us lessons to ponder and digest, sermons, seldom preachments, stories from real life, each with the warning or the example.

No one but Shakespeare has taught us so to understand our fellow-men and ourselves. No one man has so turned human brains inside out and shown the logic, the illogic of their functions. The student of psychology marvels at the skill with which Browning enters into each man's thoughts and shows how, even when admitting

and confessing or defiantly stating his thoughts and actions, he at the same time excuses and explains and justifies to himself his acts and his motives, thence expects to convince others of their propriety. This is exemplified throughout his work, most notably in some of the poems that might be called "special pleadings," such as *Fra Lippo*, *Bishop Blougram*, and others of the *Men and Women*; and also in *The Inn Album*, *Luria*, and others of the longer poems and dramas; but it reaches its high tide in *The Ring and the Book*, which Professor Corson justly regards as "the greatest achievement of the century in blank verse." The most frequent criticism of this poem is of its length, but the intelligent reader, desiring better to understand the human heart and its motives and the worth of human testimony, sees it could not be shorter and be adequate. If we cut here and there we lose from the effect, get a less clear idea of the personages. In this poem, with remarkable ability of judgment and execution, he lets each character tell the same tale in his or her own peculiar way, thus giving the reader the different facets of the gem, and eventually a truer idea of its real shape and entirety. The comparison with a gem might seem unsuited when the terrible nature of the plot is considered; but in the process of martyrdom there are two souls revealed to the world—Caponsacchi and Pompilia—that may be safely likened to gems, not flawless





ROBERT BROWNING



at first, but large enough to bear elaborate cutting and polishing, and, at last, shining with a blinding lustre as patterns for feebler men and women.

When Robert Browning decided to be a poet and a poet only, when he persisted in printing his works and offering them for sale, and was not discouraged or stayed by the fact that they had but small circulation, he showed the strength of his character, the depth of his genius, the richness of his spirit, the bravery of patience. There is a very instructive contrast to be drawn between Browning's conduct and that of the young Italian artist whose story he told Mr. Gosse, whose defiance in destroying his tools and giving up his art because of unjust discrimination against him was to Browning's mind "an act of tame renunciation" and evidence of more interest in the material than in the spiritual. A true artist is impelled by a demon of the Socratic kind. There are three self-revealing passages in Browning's verse which throw light upon this phase of the poet's character.

"A hand  
Always above my shoulder pushed me once."

The second is from *Prospice*—

"I was ever a fighter."

The third is from that last autobiographical poem, which he feared was too frank and possibly expressive of conceit, but which he decided to per-

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mit to remain. It is a stanza we could ill spare for its encouragement to others. In it he speaks of himself as

“One who never turned his back but marched breast  
forward,  
Never doubted clouds would break,  
Never dreamed, though right were worsted, wrong would  
triumph,  
Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,  
Sleep to wake.”

We should, however, recollect that Browning was able to give us his best because he was fortunate in four things not often combined in the lot of any man or woman. He had, in the main, good health, no incapacitating illnesses; he had intense human love to sweeten his life, from his parents and sister, from his wife, from his son; he had a mind content with moderate comfort, not ambitious for worldly luxury and Midas wealth; and he had, through his father, his friend, and fate, enough to supply his modest wants with some luxuries added. Under those conditions he was able to “fight on, fare ever,” and attain the highest meed at last. One who is pursued by dire poverty, ever obliged to wrest from the world payments for labor sufficient to feed and clothe oneself, especially if improvident enough to give hostages to Fortune, either lives a short life at tremendous pressure and succumbs, or becomes

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a merchant and loses his art, harnessing Pegasus to a plow.

The facts of the poet's life are now well known, but while he lived he yielded to the curiosity of the public only when tired of being annoyed by untruths, and then he gave as little as possible. He felt that the private life of a writer should be his own, and should not be laid open to the gaping eye of the merely curious; but personally in converse with his friends he was frankness itself and spoke his thoughts freely, a loyal and hearty friend of the highest type. Probably he felt so strongly his joys and griefs that it was torture to him to have them mentioned by the unfeeling, and he did all in his power to prevent discussion of his private affairs and to save himself from the pain that others were too callous to comprehend. As he grew older his objections to self-revelment were evidently modified, and his last poems were more, although still slightly, subjective.

To his sister and his son the world owes a debt of gratitude for the publication of the *Letters of Elizabeth Barrett Browning* and of the so-called "love letters" of the two—letters that are so high and beautiful in tone, having nothing of "the mawkish, the unmanly," that is usually suggested by the title, that they raise human affection to a higher plane and teach that the spirit may be the potent ruler of life and love, that husband and wife may live and love as examples for

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all. These volumes give a loftier goal, a finer model to the race, and help us to realms above the vulgar earth. Had they shown us ordinary sentimental mortals, such as we too often meet in the garish light of day and in the daily prints, there had been no excuse to place them before the public ; but as it is, they offer a standard attainable by all who strive toward the high,

“To have to do with nothing but the true,  
The good, the eternal—and these, not alone  
In the main current of the general life,  
But small experiences of every day,  
Concerns of the particular hearth and home :  
To learn not only by a comet’s rush  
But a rose’s birth—not by the grandeur, God—  
But the comfort, Christ.”

When we are obliged to forgive, excuse, shut our eyes, and pity so many great geniuses among men and women both of the past and of the present, it is a solemn joy to be able to scan the long life of this great English poet and find no blemish, no hideous blot or stain, no tragedy, no departure from the high moral standard set by Christianity—a standard seldom attained by the greatly gifted, who forget *noblesse oblige* and choose rather to be each a law unto himself. Such loyalty to the social and domestic affections, such integrity and goodness, demand remark, although it might seem belittlement did we not remember how needed are such models in this unrestrained and heedless age.

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Browning's father was "a scholar and knew Greek," a clerk in the Bank of England, comfortable in circumstances yet hoarding every possible penny for the purchase of choice books, until it became a vital question where to stow them. Yet he was most generous in the bestowal upon others of books and prints of rarity and price. His mental and moral gifts were great, and he might have excelled in the plastic arts and in verse had he inclined in either direction. The son inherited from both parents the qualities which still show in the third generation, and the poet would have been great in music, or painting, or sculpture had he not cast his life in different shape. The father would naturally have preferred for his son a more lucrative occupation, but Browning, content with little as to worldly riches, preferred to expend his energies in the domain of poetry and was permitted, indeed helped, to do as he wished.

To his mother, a woman of remarkable beauty and elevation of character, he owed much. Her health was extremely delicate, and it is quite likely that her son's tender friendship and care of her predisposed him to undertake to restore and care for the health of the woman he later insisted upon marrying in spite of herself and her father's known temper regarding the marriage of any of his children. The world is better for the example of such filial and conjugal affection. It has been

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enriched by poems neither he nor his wife could have written except for their happy marriage during fifteen years. The poet was never consoled for the death of his companion, although he learned to bear his sorrow in silence.

Mention should be made of the devoted sister who gave her loving care to her mother, comforted and attended her father until he no longer needed earthly tenderness, then transferred her undivided attention to her bereft brother, and now blesses his son by a companionship not to be estimated, in his home in lovely Asolo.

It was really *Sordello* that scared the average reader from attempting to read anything else written by Browning. Sarcasm often does more lasting harm than a sword thrust ; and the banter of wits, many of whom had not read the poem, has prevented multitudes from gaining comfort and counsel from the inspiring lines so constantly met in his work. It is astonishing how often one hears scornful criticism of Browning's poems by men who, when driven to the wall, declare they have never read nor do they intend to read a single one. *Le style c'est l'homme* is here true. Browning could not write, except for a few lines at a time, in the average manner of Longfellow, of Tennyson, of Moore. His nature was too complex, his memory too tremendous, his interests too wide, his intense emotions too easily aroused, his eyes too open to the influence of his



age, to permit him to sit down and in cold blood write short sentences. In this respect he is the reflex of the days of Darwin, and Spencer, and their scientific followers or opponents. His prose is not of short smooth sentences ; it is involved, parenthetical, full of detail, showing the same characteristics as his verse. Some of what have been called his defects of style are due to his connection with Germany through his maternal grandfather, and, doubtless, to his desultory and unsystematic education which allowed an unpruned luxuriance of a sturdy stock. The fanatic boldly declares him faultless, these blemishes, "beauties." The just critic wishes the poet had remembered that not everyone possessed so extraordinary a memory as his and that he had been able to take shorter breaths, make more frequent periods. But in spite of all this, when once we have read, again and again we return to read. One well-known transcendentalist said he exclaimed, on reading *Sordello* the third time, that he thought it the worst and most incomprehensible poem in the language, but after reading it the twelfth time he called it the best. Here is some hyperbole, of course. Only one other poem of Browning's, *Fifine*, is parallel with this in difficulty, and these two should be left to the connoisseurs, to those who wish to read them, and not be forced upon the unlettered. They are of great interest to the philosopher and the psychologist ; and to many

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certain places in Italy and also the history of the Guelph and Ghibelline struggle have been rendered of interest by *Sordello*.

Now there is no ground for complaint of obscurity, since loving minds and hearts and hands have prepared helps in every direction. The books of Berdoo, Cooke, Corson, Mrs. Orr are standards, and others may be added as the need arises.

In America Robert Browning has always been appreciated by a few at least, and at last by a multitude. More than one circle has been formed for the reading and study of his works; one or two have existed for eighteen years or more. The London Browning Society was founded in 1881, partly for pleasure, but more to make popular writings so helpful and beautiful. When that work was accomplished the society dissolved. But many clubs have been founded in widely distant places, and while many persons look upon the matter as one of fashion or hobby, others see a genuine love and appreciation growing among all English-speaking people. It is most interesting to know that in the south of London there is a social settlement called Browning Hall, and the working people that congregate there love the poet because he wrote about Pippa, and Hervé Riel, and Theocrite. One working among the newsboys of Chicago found they cared to hear Browning read and even "asked for more."

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For the reader who has little time, there could be no better choice of poems for pleasure and help than the two little volumes of *Selections*. He will be led gradually to other and longer works and will be richly repaid for any exertion he puts forth in their perusal.

It seems a pity that one of the most important of American critics and students of literature should have made so superficial a study of Browning's poems that in the early and in the latest editions the same error persists. This is evidently not from the fault of the printer, because not once but twice on the same page appears the name of the exquisite heroine of *The Ring and the Book* as Pampilia instead of Pompilia. And in another place, although absolute authorities are many and easily accessible, he nonchalantly and parenthetically remarks on his ignorance of the order of production of some of these extraordinary poems. We are not of those that accuse him of what in a recent preface he excuses himself from, "hostility," but we regret he has been no more thoroughly imbued with the excellencies and beauties of the poems. It must be because he has given them too little time and attention.

It is pleasant to recall, in closing, that in the quaint hill-town of his early and late affection, Robert Browning has a fitting memorial due to filial piety. Because the father wrote *Pippa Passes* and delighted in the charming little realm

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of Queen Caterina Cornaro, the son has desired to benefit that town in some lasting manner. Unable to resuscitate the silk industry, he has founded a lace school where young girls may learn a means of livelihood other than the manual labor in the fields ; and the beautiful products find a market in England and among those that love and honor the poet. One of the pleasantest recollections is of the bright Italian faces bending over their lace-pillows, each eager to have the individual design and reproduction viewed in turn by the eyes of the American girl who had journeyed so far to see them and their home—a home made famous in modern days by a king among men.

*Marie Ada Holmes Esq.*

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THE POETRY OF  
MATTHEW ARNOLD:

*A Study by* T. M. PARROTT

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# THE POETRY OF MATTHEW ARNOLD:

## *A Study by* T. M. PARROTT

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Thomas Marc Parrott, a native of Ohio, was graduated from the College of New Jersey, now Princeton University, in the year 1888. He was for two years a member of the teaching force of Miami University, Ohio, and then went to the University of Leipzig, where he spent three years in the study of the modern languages and philosophy. In 1893 he received the degree of doctor of philosophy from that institution, his thesis being a study of the non-dramatic poems of Robert Browning. On his return to America Dr. Parrott spent a year at Princeton as Fellow in English, and two years at Lawrenceville School as assistant master. In 1896 he was called to Princeton as assistant professor in English, the position which he still occupies. Dr. Parrott has edited Macaulay's essays on Milton and Addison for the college entrance requirements in English, and has contributed a number of papers on literature, particularly on Shakespearian topics, to the Home Study department of the Chicago *Record*.

**I**t is by his poetry that the place of Matthew Arnold in English literature will in the end be determined. Such was not, it is true, the opinion of his immediate contemporaries. Whether they cheered him on as a child of the Sun God slaying with the shafts of Apollo the giants of Philistia and the dragons of antiquated superstition, or whether they shrank from him as a faithless and

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hopeless blasphemer of national traditions and the ancient faith, the men of his own age thought rather of his prose than of his poetry. One reason for this no doubt lay in the predominating quantity of his prose. His poems are contained in one not very lengthy volume; his essays and discourses, his lectures and criticisms—religious, educational, social, and literary—fill book after book. His poetry was for the most part written before he was forty years old, though he remained a prominent figure in the world of letters till his death at something over sixty-five.

Moreover there was something in the quality of Arnold's poetic work that tended to make it caviare to the general. Neither the weakness nor the splendors which made Tennyson the darling of his age were his; nor did he have the quick, keen interest in life, the broad human sympathies which so rapidly recommended Browning to the hearts of thinking, feeling men and women on both sides of the Atlantic, when once the spell of his strange new style was broken. Arnold's first volume of poems attracted hardly any attention; his second he himself withdrew from the public before fifty copies were sold. The splendidly sympathetic review by Swinburne of the *New Poems* of 1867 marks the turn of the tide. This, Arnold's last book of verse, was the first that met with anything like an appreciative reception from the general public; and with this book he laid aside his singing robes.

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Except for the noble elegy on Dean Stanley and two or three graceful and tender poems on the death of some household pets, he wrote no line of poetry again.

But today when his theological polemics are neglected alike by friend and foe, when his social ideals are, for good or evil, very rapidly left behind in the tremendous advance of scientific materialism, when even his literary judgments are assailed as partial and subjective, the beauty and the worth of his poetry are dawning more brightly upon a world that begins to wonder at its own blindness. A hush has fallen upon English poetry in the last decade. The clanging trumpet tones of Browning ring no longer in our ears ; the rich and tender harmonies of Tennyson no longer overwhelm the other voices. Out of the past there rises the cool, fine, flute-like note of Arnold—not broad, not deep, but of a charm for the lovers of purity and perfection in art such as is hard to find elsewhere in English poetry.

No good biography of Arnold exists, but after all it does not much matter. The important facts of his life are known, and his *Letters*, published in 1895, give us a presentation of his personality such as few biographies afford. He was the oldest son of a father scarcely less famous than himself, Dr. Thomas Arnold, the scholar, historian, and preacher. He received the orthodox classical English education, at Winchester, at Rugby

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under his father, and at Oxford. As an undergraduate at the university he did not greatly distinguish himself, although he won a prize for poetry and took a fellowship at Oriel College. But he drank deep of the fountains of classical literature and poetry. In one sense of the word, at least, he is the most classic of the Victorian poets. In poetry, as in criticism, he looked back to the Greeks as his models, and his love of clearness, of order and restraint, of firm outline and polished phrase, are largely due to his long and loving study of the ancient masters.

There were, however, other influences upon his youth than that of the Greeks. Foremost of these, perhaps, was the influence of Goethe. No other English poet reveals in the same degree as Arnold the deep impression left on modern life and thought by the greatest of all modern poets since Shakespeare. What appealed to him especially in Goethe was the keen insight into the problems of life, the serene and lofty spirit that rose above the turmoil of the world, the mingled strength and sweetness of the poet's nature. In prose and verse Arnold is never weary of paying homage to his master.

“He took the suffering human race,  
He read each wound, each weakness clear;  
And struck his finger on the place,  
And said: *Thou ailest here, and here!*  
He look'd on Europe's dying hour

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Of fitful dream and feverish power ;  
His eye plunged down the weltering strife,  
The turmoil of expiring life—  
He said : *The end is everywhere,*  
*Art still has truth, take refuge there !*  
And he was happy, if to know  
Causes of things, and far below  
His feet to see the lurid flow  
Of terror, and insane distress,  
And headlong fate, be happiness."

Even more important, perhaps, in its influence on the young Arnold was the poetry and personality of Wordsworth. Of all the poets of the French Revolution Wordsworth has exercised the greatest power over his successors in English literature. Indeed, with the exception of Browning, the most original and independent of them all, there is hardly a poet, before the advent of the Pre-Raphaelites, who does not show strong traces of his masterful sway. But nowhere else did Wordsworth find so reverent a disciple as in Arnold. It was not only the instinctive worship which boyhood pays to genius, though the long sojourns of the Arnolds in the region where every flower, and rock, and stream was sanctified by Wordsworth's song may have laid the foundations of his discipleship. But it was because Wordsworth had found the secret which Arnold sought after in vain—the secret whose mystery wrung from him at times his most lyrical cry. One word appears again and again in Arnold's verse—"calm." In

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all his strife with the crushing influences of the world, in all his doubts and agonies of spirit, Arnold looks forward to this goal. It is not triumph, or knowledge, or love that Arnold prays for, but serene, unshaken repose, attained after the storms of life by self-mastery of spirit. And Wordsworth had not only attained this calm, but seemed to have the power in happy moments to guide his followers to the same desired haven.

“He found us when the age had bound  
Our souls in its benumbing round ;  
He spoke, and loosed our heart in tears.  
He laid us as we lay at birth  
On the cool flowery lap of earth,  
Smiles broke from us and we had ease;  
The hills were round us, and the breeze  
Went o’er the sun-lit fields again ;  
Our foreheads felt the wind and rain.  
Our youth return’d ; for there was shed  
On spirits that had long been dead,  
Spirits dried up and closely furl’d,  
The freshness of the early world.”

No account of the forces that went to mold the character of Matthew Arnold would be complete which neglected the influence exerted upon him by his father. In some respects the two were far apart. Dr. Arnold, with all his genuine goodness, was something of a Philistine—so much so, that some mocking critic characterized Matthew, the deadly enemy of Philistia, as “David, the son

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of Goliath." He was somewhat hard, somewhat narrow, and not only a sincere believer in orthodox Christianity, but one of its foremost champions against the new spirit of doubt. At the first glance it is the unlikeness, rather than the likeness, between father and son that is apparent. But one need not be a profound student of Matthew Arnold to recognize the paternal qualities in his work and character. From his father came his sincerity, his moral earnestness, his care for conduct—in short, all the Hebraic elements of his nature. With all his championship of Hellenism Matthew Arnold was, one feels, rather a Jew than a Greek, more at home with St. Paul than with Socrates. Something more than mere filial reverence inspires the noble memorial verses written by his father's grave in Rugby Chapel. There is spiritual sympathy as well as profound admiration in the lines which tell of that strength, "zealous, beneficent, firm." The elder Arnold was to his son a glorious example of the servants, or rather of the sons of God, who save not themselves alone. In the hour of need, he says :

"Of your fainting, dispirited race,  
Ye, like angels, appear,  
Radiant with ardour divine !

. . . . .

Languor is not in your heart,  
Weakness is not in your word,

Weariness not on your brow.  
Ye alight in our van ! at your voice,  
Panic, despair, flee away.

. . . . .

Ye fill up the gaps in our files,  
Strengthen the wavering line,  
Stablish, continue our march,  
On, to the bound of the waste,  
On, to the City of God."

Such were the influences under which the young poet brought out, in 1849, his first book of verse, *The Strayed Reveller and Other Poems*. It fell, as has been said, still-born from the press. The same fate, to be sure, has attended most first volumes of verse, but few have deserved it less. Browning and Tennyson are undoubtedly greater poets than Arnold, but only a prophet after the event would be able to discern more of promise in the incoherent beauties of *Pauline*, or in the somewhat thoughtless rimes and pictures of *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical*, than in this little volume, while in actual performance it fairly beats them out of the field. Setting aside the title poem, a series of pictures loosely strung together in the irregular rimeless metre that Arnold was so fond of, we have here the splendid sonnet to Shakespeare, the strong and finely finished *Mycerinus*, the magic melodies of *The New Sirens*, and the grave pathos of *The Sick King in Bokhara*. And there are even finer things in the book.

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*The Forsaken Merman*, for example, is a permanent addition to English literature. How good it is may perhaps be best ascertained by a comparison with Tennyson's early poems, the *Merman* and the *Mermaid*. It is hard to praise with discretion the vivid clearness of its pictures, the haunting music of its changing rhythms, and, best and rarest of all, the passionate cry of a wild, immortal, yet strangely human pathos. One, at least, of the shorter lyrics in this volume shows Arnold for a brief space under the influence of Shelley, and it is to be regretted that he did not yield oftener to the spell; *A Question* is so purely Shelleyan that it might almost be classed with some of the minor songs of the master lyrist. But after all Arnold at his best has a style of his own which is more delightful than any faint Shelleyan echoes. Of that style we need not attempt a definition; an example will serve our purpose better, and the lovely and gracious words fairly tempt the pen to transcribe them.

“Thin, thin the pleasant human noises grow,  
And faint the city gleams ;  
Rare the lone pastoral huts—marvel not thou !  
The solemn peaks but to the stars are known,  
But to the stars, and the cold lunar beams ;  
Alone the sun arises, and alone  
Spring the great streams.”

Walter Bagehot once wrote an interesting and suggestive essay on the pure, the ornate, and the

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grotesque styles in English poetry. Tennyson serves him well for the ornate, some carefully chosen passages of Browning furnish striking specimens of the grotesque, and for examples of the pure style he goes back to Wordsworth and to Milton. But he need not have gone back so far, for in this first work of Arnold we have, and not for the last time, a specimen of the pure style almost at its best. It is as classic as a statue by Praxiteles. Not a word can be added, not a word can be altered, the pictorial and musical qualities blend in perfect harmony, and the grave music of the verse gives fit utterance to the solemn beauty of the thought.

The last poem of the collection, though by no means the most perfect, is perhaps the most remarkable, and in many ways the most characteristic, in the book. *Resignation* is the first poem where the distinctive Arnoldian undertone of grave and thoughtful melancholy vibrates throughout. Here, too, we have in quintessence Arnold's whole poetic philosophy; the immutability of nature and of her laws, the restless longing of the heart of man, the vanity of this longing and of all struggle to realize it, the duty of renunciation and endurance, the aid which nature offers in the effort to endure, and the final reward of renunciation in the attainment of "quiet, and a fearless mind." It is not a very cheerful philosophy for a young man of twenty-seven, but to Arnold, at all



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times of his life, the world was not a cheerful, though far from an unlovely, place.

“The mute turf we tread,  
The solemn hills around us spread,  
This stream which falls incessantly,  
The strange-scrawl'd rocks, the lonely sky,  
If I might lend their life a voice,  
Seem to bear rather than rejoice.”

The characteristic notes and beauties of this volume appear again and again in Arnold's later poems. Arnold developed, indeed, and increased his powers, but he remained essentially the same. There is no such change in him as we find between the Browning of *Pauline* and the Browning of *The Ring and the Book*, or the Tennyson of *Lilian* or *The Sea-Fairies* and the Tennyson of *Rizpah* or *Vastness*.

Arnold's second volume, *Empedocles on Etna and Other Poems*, appeared in 1852, and was hastily withdrawn from circulation by the author. The reason for this appears to have been that he could not bear to contemplate the title-piece in print. “A situation,” he said, “in which a continuous state of mental distress is prolonged, unrelieved by incident, hope, or resistance, is in actual life painful, not tragic, and its representation in poetry is painful also.” This is no doubt true, and, moreover, it must be confessed that *Empedocles* as a drama, even as a closet drama, is quite

impossible. But the poem may be regarded in another light than as a drama, and all lovers of true poetry owe deep gratitude to Robert Browning who persuaded Arnold to reprint, in 1867, this long suppressed work. It contains in the long monologue of the hero "the noblest exposition," to quote Swinburne's words, "of the gospel of *autarkeia*, the creed of self-sufficiency, which sees for man no clearer or deeper duty than that of intellectual self-reliance, self-dependence, self-respect." Even those who reject this gospel of self-sufficiency as wholly inadequate may appreciate the dignity of its ideas and the grave beauty of the words in which they are presented. Of the lovely group of songs put into the mouth of Callicles there can be but one opinion—they are flawless gems in the crown of English lyric poetry. And their beauty is enhanced by the perfect propriety of their setting. Arnold loved to finish his longer poems with some specially fine bit of verse, not always very closely connected with the main subject. The classical example, of course, is the superb *finale* of *Sohrab and Rustum*; but even that noble passage yields in dramatic propriety to the last song of Callicles. After the bitterness of human anguish, after the flame and smoke of Etna, comes Apollo with his choir, comes

"The night in her silence,  
The stars in their calm."

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*Tristram and Iseult*, next to *Empedocles* the longest poem of this volume, is by no means the best. It is Arnold's first attempt at narrative poetry, and though he was more successful in this field than in the drama, he cannot be called a master in the art of telling a story. There are many beautiful passages in the poem, chiefly lyrical or descriptive, but it breaks down at the very climax. Arnold had a strange deficiency of ear, though, at his best, none of his contemporaries was master of a finer music, and in this poem he chooses to embody the passionate parting words of the ill-starred lovers in a jingling trochaic metre that jars on every sense of the fitness of things.

### *Iseult*

“Tristram, ah, for love of Heaven, speak kindly !  
What, I hear these bitter words from thee ?  
Sick with grief I am, and faint with travel—  
Take my hand—dear Tristram, look on me !

### *Tristram.*

I forgot, thou comest from thy voyage.—”

The truth is that Arnold, one of the least passionate of English poets, simply could not conceive such a situation as this, and his attempt to portray what he had neither seen nor felt was fore-doomed to failure. A passage in the third part of the poem probably represents his own view of such a love as Tristram and Iseult's.

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“I swear, it angers me to see  
How this fool passion gulls men potently;  
Being, in truth, but a diseased unrest,  
And an unnatural overheat at best.”

That is a philosophic and, possibly, a correct view; but it is hardly capable of poetic treatment. To do Arnold justice he seems to have realized his own deficiencies in this matter. Love, which plays so large a part in the poetry of Browning and Tennyson, is almost entirely absent from his verse. Its place is taken sometimes by tender affection, oftener by hopeless longing. Never after his failure in *Tristram and Iseult* did he attempt to handle a great passion

Two of the most noteworthy poems of this volume are the *Memorial Verses* and the *Stanzas in Memory of the Author of Obermann*. Both belong, as their titles show, to the group of elegiac poems which go so far to establish Arnold's rank as a poet. Something more must be said of this group in the closing estimate of Arnold's work. It is enough for the present to point out that these two poems both for conception and execution, for polished beauty of word and grave dignity of thought, rank very high in the group to which they belong.

Two other poems in this volume deserve more than a passing notice. *A Summer Night* is, perhaps, the very highest poetic expression of the mingled despair and fortitude, the disgust with

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the world and the relief to be found in the contemplation of nature, which go to make up the essential undertone of most of Arnold's work. And the technical excellencies of the poem, as is always the case when Arnold is possessed by his theme, are the perfect reflection of the underlying thought. The lovely moonlit night piece with which the poem opens, the contrast between the slave of life and the rebel, are equally fine in thought and word, and the poem rises to its fitting climax of supreme lyrical utterance in the noble apostrophe to the heavens which forms its close.

The poem known under the various titles of *To Marguerite—In Returning a Volume of Letters*, *Isolation*, and *To Marguerite—Continued*, is the crowning flower of Arnold's poems of love. And it is worth noting that the poem deals, not with the rapture of possession, nor with the unutterable sadness of remembered kisses after death, but with that sense of the predestined solitude of the soul which even love is unable to overcome. The theme is the same as that of Browning in *Two in the Campagna*, and nothing can show more clearly the difference between the character and art of the two great poets than a comparison of the elder singer's strong and vibrating emotion, full of the sense of infinite passion and the pain of finite hearts, with the melancholy acceptance by the younger of the solemn

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laws under which "we mortal millions live alone." From the point of view of pure poetry, at least, the comparison does not turn out to Arnold's disadvantage; the closing phrase, in which all the depth, and bitterness, and sad dividing power of the sea are caught up in three words, may challenge a place among the greatest single lines of English poetry.

How any poet could have the heart to withdraw such a volume from the public is inexplicable except on the theory that he fell back in order to make his entrance more effective when next he appeared in the lists. The withdrawal, at any rate, was short, for in the next year, 1853, Arnold put forth another volume, omitting, indeed, *Empedocles* and some other poems, but reprinting a fair selection from his earlier work, and adding several new poems of great worth and beauty.

The longest and most pretentious of these is *Sohrab and Rustum*. This is admittedly the best of Arnold's narrative poems, and by some critics it is ranked as the first of all his works. This, however, is an opinion which seems to be based on theory rather than on facts. Undoubtedly the epic is the noblest form of poetry, and undoubtedly this is Arnold's nearest approach to epic grandeur. But in art a success, even along lower lines, outweighs an ambitious but unattaining effort. And that *Sohrab and Rustum*, in spite of its manifold beauties, its stately verse, its

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noble imagery, and well-conducted story, does not quite attain will be clear, it seems to me, to anyone who compares it with the true epic tone in ancient or modern verse, with the wrath and sorrow of Achilles, with the love and vengeance of Kriemhild, with the glory of war and loyalty that rings through the last great canto of Marmion. The situation is one of the most pathetic in literature ; but where is the thrill of vital sympathy to make us feel it ? Where is the divine creative power to put life into the stately but shadowy figures of father and son caught in the toils of Fate ? *Sohrab and Rustum* is a noble poem—one that can be read and re-read with increasing admiration. But it is admiration for the chaste and polished art of the poet that we feel, rather than the presence of the fierce and tragic power that, in the true masters of the epic, grips and carries us where it will.

At least two of the lyrics of this volume would suffice to save a poet from complete forgetfulness : *Philomela*, in which Arnold catches the passion, as surely as Keats did the magic, of the nightingale's song, and the wonderful *Requiescat*. Of such a song as this last it is useless to speak. If a reader cannot see its flawless perfection ; if he cannot feel its tender beauty and solemn pathos, culminating in one of the unforgettable Arnoldian phrases, he is much to be pitied, but not to be argued with.

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*The Church of Brou*, on the other hand, shares with *Tristram* the distinction of being one of the few uneven, one might almost say unsatisfactory, pieces of Arnold's work. It was apparently written some years before the publication of the volume, and its early date may account for the triviality of its first and the inadequacy of its second part. But the close is in Arnold's best vein. Here, as seldom in his verse, the tender note of human affection vibrates through the soft reposeful beauty of the words. It is quite worth while to read through the earlier parts for the shock of pleased surprise that comes with the opening invocation of the third,

"So rest, forever rest, O princely Pair."

And amazement gives way to a reverent thankfulness for such a precious gift of song, as we approach the noble climax and listen with the buried lovers to the passage of the angel's wings,

"And on the lichen-crustled leads above  
The rustle of the eternal rain of love."

The crowning glory of the whole volume is *The Scholar-Gipsy*, but we may defer comment on this poem till we can consider it along with its companion piece, *Thyrsis*.

Two years later, in 1855, Arnold published a second series of selections from his earlier poems, adding to them only one short song of little value, and the long narrative of *Balder Dead*. This



poem has had the good fortune to be praised by Mr. Henley, no mean judge of poetry and somewhat sparing of his praise. But one can hardly agree with him that *Balder Dead* was "written in Arnold's most fortunate hour." Whatever has been said in praise of *Sohrab and Rustum* may be repeated of this poem. But it has, if possible, even less of life than its predecessor. All the world, runs the old story, wept for Balder's death; but it is hard to imagine that any human being was ever moved to tears by Arnold's version of the strange, sad tale. Its artificial beauties, "faultily faultless, icily regular, splendidly null," leave most of us as cold as the waste of snow that Hermod traversed on his way to Hela's realm.

The year 1858 saw the appearance of the one work of Arnold's which must be pronounced a hopeless failure. *Merope* is an attempt to reproduce in English the old Greek drama. Imitations are, as a rule, fore-doomed to failure, and of all imitations that of the Greek drama in modern English seems the most hopeless. It has been attempted countless times, and there has been but one approach to success in all the number, Swinburne's *Atalanta in Calydon*. It is not worth while in this place to discuss the reason for such failure; better to lay *Merope* aside and pass on to Arnold's last book of verse.

This was the *New Poems* published in 1867, the year in which he laid down his professorship

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of poetry at Oxford. The book falls naturally into three parts—the sonnets, the lyrics rimed and rimeless, and the elegies. Perhaps no single one of the sonnets is quite the equal of the great apostrophe to Shakespeare in the first volume, but the group as a whole outranks its earlier fellows. Several of them are particularly distinguished by the depth and sincerity of the religious sentiment which breathes through them—a sentiment which shows a better, and essentially a truer, side of Arnold than the reckless flippancy of many of his controversial writings.

The lyrics of the collection are, with one exception, hardly up to the earlier standard. But that exception is so excellent that it alone would save the volume; it is *Dover Beach*. Here once more we have Arnold at his best, thought, word, and rhythm blending in the perfect song. It is hard to know what to praise most in the poem, the glorious picture of the moonlight and the floodtide, the “passionate interpretation of nature” which catches in the tremulous cadence of the waves the eternal note of sadness, or the famous simile of the ebbing of the sea of faith. And besides all these there is one supreme touch in this lyric which gives it a unique place among all Arnold’s poems—the human cry with which the last stanza opens,

“ Ah, love, let us be true  
To one another ! ”



MATTHEW ARNOLD



Here for once the sad, proud consciousness of isolation gives way to the sense of human sympathy and comradeship in all disastrous fight. For once we note in Arnold the presence of the idea which the great symbolic painter of his day embodied immortally in "Love and Life."

It is after all, however, the elegies which give to this volume its distinctive note. Of these, *Heine's Grave*, in spite of the fine and often quoted passage on the weary Titan, is the least satisfactory. It is written in the irregular rimeless verse that had such a dangerous fascination for Arnold. *Rugby Chapel* is in the same metre, but here the poet is really possessed by his theme, and the result is a very noble tribute to the dead—noticeable among all of Arnold's elegies for the explicit testimony it bears to his belief in immortality. The *Stanzas from Carnac* and *A Southern Night* are memorials to his brother, the latter a very beautiful lament, flooded, like so many of Arnold's poems, with moonlight, and murmurous with the sound of the sea. *Obermann* *Once More* and the *Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse* are naturally connected by their theme, the lament for a dead faith. *Obermann* is somewhat too long. The shadowy personage who gives the poem its name discourses through nine pages on the rise and fall of religion, on present despair and hope for the future. The first part of his speech, indeed, is already a classic ;

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everyone knows the famous stanzas that tell of the hard Pagan world, the brooding East, the miraculous conquests, and slow, reluctant death of Christianity. But the remainder of the poem is somewhat diffuse and contrasts unfavorably with the terser, stronger close of the *Obermann* poem of 1852. The *Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse*, however, are not open to the charge of diffuseness. Indeed, it is hard to see what charge the lover of pure and thoughtful poetry could bring against them. We have in them the highest expression in the elegiac mood of the theme that Arnold treated with supreme lyric power in *Dover Beach*. They are a revelation of the poet's own divided mind.

“Wandering between two worlds, one dead,  
The other powerless to be born.”

But they are something more than that. The poem, as a whole, is a typical, one might almost say the typical, utterance of the Middle Victorian era, a period when rationalistic science seemed to be carrying all before it. The calm assumption that the Christian faith is only “a dead time's exploded dream” is by no means peculiar to Arnold. It marks much, perhaps most, of the thought of his day. What is peculiar to Arnold is his sincere regret for the vanished past, his instinctive repugnance to the hardness and loudness of the new age, even though he believes that the age is

right. This attitude is disclosed even more plainly in the remarkable poem, *Bacchanalia*, which is also included in this volume.

And now we come to *Thyrsis*, with its predecessor, *The Scholar-Gipsy*. Here, it would seem, if anywhere, we have the noblest work of Arnold. Serene beauty of thought, tender melancholy of mood, perfect fitness of expression, and harmonious rhythm, characterize both these poems and characterize them throughout. There are no languors, no depressions, no passages of prose thrown into metrical form. The famous simile with which *The Scholar-Gipsy* closes is far from being the "purple patch" it has irreverently been styled. One does not sew a purple patch upon a robe of Tyrian dye; and, fine as the closing stanzas are, they yield in excellence to some of the earlier pictures of English life and scenery. Two beauties we may note common to both these poems; Arnold's loving memories of his *alma mater*, and his intense and almost sensuous delight in aspects of nature inseparably blended with those memories. Arnold has apostrophized Oxford in a famous prose passage, but all that he says there is packed into one line of *Thyrsis*,

"That sweet city with her dreaming spires."

The loving sympathy with nature apparent in almost every line of these poems it is impossible to praise too highly. The picture in *Thyrsis* of the

storm-vexed trees and the fallen chestnut flowers in an English garden is a masterpiece of poetic word-painting. Hardly less delightful is the picture of the moonlit ferry on the stripling Thames in *The Scholar-Gipsy*, or that in which the line of festal light in Christ-Church hall shines through the blinding snow-storm on the Cumner hills. And for once in Arnold's work the old opposition between the restless, turbulent soul of man and the sweet calm of nature disappears. In these two poems nature and man blend together in a perfect harmony.

Poetry like this tempts one to linger over it. There is much that might be said. It is hard to pass over without mention Arnold's striking success in adapting the conventions of the antique pastoral elegy to a lament for a modern poet. Something, too, one would like to say on the gleam of hope that lights the close of *Thyrsis*, faint, indeed, when compared with the sun-burst that exalts and glorifies the final stanzas of *Adonais*, but not without a tender beauty of its own. But all one can do is to recommend these poems to every lover of pure poetry. They will serve as an unfailing test of a reader's power to appreciate poetry for its own sake.

*Westminster Abbey*, the elegy on Arnold's school friend, Dean Stanley, is a noble poem, but after *Thyrsis* it seems a little cold, a little artificial. The group of poems on the household pets,

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Geist, Matthias, and Kaiser, deserves, at least, a passing mention. Here a very different Arnold is revealed from the Arnold of the poems or the essays. It is the Arnold whom only his intimates knew—gentle, affectionate, playful, and not without a trace of kindly humor, the centre of a pleasant company of cats and canaries, and children and dachshunds. They are not without true poetic merit, these little poems; but their chief value lies in the revelation which they make of a new and more genial side of the poet's mind and life.

Some of the characteristic beauties and defects of Arnold have been revealed by this critical examination of his successive volumes. But a brief summary may serve to gather up the results so far attained and to fix them in the reader's mind.

In the first place, it is easy to say what Arnold was not. He was not a great narrative poet. No need, after all, to compare him with the great masters of the epic—his own contemporaries surpassed him again and again. Matthew Arnold could no more have written *How They Brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix* or *The Revenge* than he could have written the *Iliad* or *Paradise Lost*; this in spite of his theory that "the eternal objects of poetry are actions—human actions." But Arnold, like his master, Wordsworth, achieves the best results when he departs from theory and surrenders himself to instinct and inspiration. He was not himself a man of action, nor was he capa-

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ble of sympathizing with action, except theoretically. He disliked and distrusted nearly all the great actors in the social and political movements of his day. Small wonder, then, that his narrative poems interest us by their beauty of form, by their lyrical, descriptive, or meditative passages—by anything, in short, rather than by the human actions which they portray.

Again Arnold is not a dramatic poet. We may waive the fact that he never succeeded in writing a successful play. No more did Browning or Tennyson. But Arnold cannot lay claim even to the dramatic qualities which Browning and Tennyson possessed. We have seen that he could not tell a satisfactory story, but it is even plainer that he could not create a character at all. As we review Arnold's work we realize, with a little touch of surprise, the almost entire absence from it of men and women. The unreality of Sohrab and of Rustum has been already pointed out; the gods in *Balder* are even more remote and lifeless; Obermann is a ghost, the Scholar-Gipsy a myth, even the poet's nearest friend becomes the conventional dead shepherd of pastoral elegy. And the women! Marguerite is a dainty lady who allows herself to be kissed and abandoned, neither with extreme concern; Fausta and Eugenia are mere *nomina umbræ*. The truth is that Arnold is one of the least objective of English poets. Byron's lack of objectivity is a commonplace of criticism;

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but Byron had, at least, the gift of projecting his own great personality into the figures of his poems. Harold, Manfred, and Juan are, it may be, mere embodiments of various aspects of their creator, but they share something of his fiery life, and so long as the personality of Byron thrills and fascinates, so long will these characters endure—and that will be as long as English poetry is read. But is there any character in Arnold's poetry which can be identified with Arnold?

On the technical side of poetry there are few faults to be found with Arnold's work, yet even here the adversary may advance something against him. He lacked almost entirely the richness of color, the delight in lovely words for their own sake and for the sake of their associations, which makes so many lines of Tennyson a wonder and a wild delight. He lacked almost entirely the sense, to use his own fine phrase, of that natural magic, by which at times Shakespeare seems to transport us in the twinkling of an eye from this dull world to fairyland. Worst of all, he lacked the true poetic ear. This led him to perpetrate such rimes as "ranging" and "hanging," as "scorn" and "faun;" at times to write, under the delusion that it was poetry, such a passage as the following, which, printed as prose, reads:

"Thou standest smiling down on me!  
Thy right arm, leaned up against the col-  
umn there, props thy soft cheek; thy left

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holds, hanging loosely, the deep cup, ivy-cinctured, I held but now."

It would be an interesting and not uninteresting exercise for the student of poetry to attempt the scansion of these lines, or even their arrangement in metrical form. Nor was this dulness of ear a fault which Arnold outgrew. Some of his most prosaic and unrhythmical passages occur in his last volume of verse.

And now, having cleared the field, we may proceed to the more pleasing and gracious task of defining what Arnold was, and of pointing out his peculiar poetic characteristics. He was, undoubtedly, a great didactic and critical, a great elegiac and lyric poet. Didactic, not in the old-fashioned sense of Pope and Johnson, nor even in the often too obtrusive fashion of Wordsworth. But he had a distinct philosophy of life, and this philosophy interpenetrates and informs his poetry. It does not harm it. Arnold, in poetry at least, was not one of those preachers who are forever dragging in the moral. He lived in the world of ideas, as some poets, Mr. Kipling, for example, live in the world of actions. The desire to impart ideas roused him to a point as near that of passionate poetic sympathy as he ever approached. And, accordingly, some of his very best poetry appears in these efforts to communicate ideas which to him were vital and salutary truths. We need only turn to the later sonnets, to *Resignation*, *A*

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*Summer Night*, and the *Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse* to realize the truth of this statement.

Arnold is, perhaps, the first and greatest of our critical poets. He once defined poetry as being essentially a criticism of life. If poetry were this and this alone, Arnold would be the greatest of English poets. Poetry, of course, is infinitely more than this, even if we give to the definition of criticism Arnold's wide extension of meaning. But whether we take criticism in this larger sense as a study of life with the purpose of distinguishing between the false and the true, or in the customary narrower sense, as the effort to ascertain the predominating ideas and salient characteristics of a writer, Arnold's poetry along these lines stands almost unrivaled. For a criticism of life, for a criticism of literature, couched in grave yet lovely and harmonious verse such as abounds in the monologue of *Empedocles*, in the memorial verses for Wordsworth, and in the *Obermann* poems, we may go far afield before we find his fitting mate.

Arnold's elegies alone would assign him a place among the greater Victorian poets. One critic, indeed, has gone so far as to call him the greatest elegiac poet in English literature. This seems a bold saying, for surely Arnold has never reached such heights as Milton in *Lycidas*, Shelley in *Adonais*, and Tennyson in *In Memoriam*. But quantity counts for something also in determining

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a poet's work, provided always that it is quantity which does not fall below a certain mark of excellence. And no other English poet has given us so many grave and tender elegies as the author of *Thyrsis*, the *Memorial Verses*, *A Southern Night*, *Rugby Chapel*, *Heine's Grave*, the *Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse*, and the two poems in memory of the author of *Obermann*. The mere roll-call of these titles is enough to confirm those who know their Arnold in the belief that he ranks among the very first of the English poets of sorrow and melancholy meditation. He was, indeed, well fitted by nature to be an elegiac poet. A famous phrase in *Resignation* speaks of the poet's "sad lucidity of soul." This quality was eminently characteristic of Arnold himself, and it distinguishes and elevates all his elegies. Sad an elegy must be by its very nature; but it must also be lucid. Wild and wandering cries, however poignant and pathetic they may be, are out of place in this form of poetry. Unless a poet can so far master his sorrow as to look through it and above it, he will prove as incapable of embodying it in the somewhat conventional forms of the elegy, as he will prove incapable of filling these forms with true and sympathetic poetry if his sorrow be not genuine and deeply felt. From this point of view it might be maintained, and not altogether without reason, that *Thyrsis* is the most perfect elegy in English.

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And when to this trait of sad lucidity we add the beauty of the diction, imbued, as it is, with a richness of color very rare in Arnold's work, and the melodious rhythm of the echoing lines, the reasons for such a preference seem weighty indeed. But the ranking of poets or poems is a dangerous, and, as a matter of fact, an uncritical performance. It is enough to demonstrate what one poet has done without attempting to place him above or below his fellows. And of the beauty and merit of Arnold's elegies there can be no doubt in the mind of any student of English poetry.

It is another matter with his lyrical poems. Arnold is not, as a rule, reckoned one of the great singers of our language. Yet I believe the time will come when critics will not only recognize in Arnold's lyrics the loveliest flowers in his garden of verse, but will pronounce any anthology of English lyrics incomplete which does not contain more than one or two of these priceless blossoms of pure poetry. Listen for a moment to the lyrical cry that rings through *Requiescat*, *Dover Beach*, *In Utrumque Paratus*, the songs of Callicles, the second *Isolation*, and consider whether we have not here a note as rare as it is beautiful. Tennyson alone, it seems to me, among Victorian poets, can equal these effects, and even Tennyson lacks at times the purity, the simplicity, and the directness which characterize the best of Arnold's lyrics. Browning has many passages

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and some whole poems instinct with true lyrical feeling, but as a rule Browning is not subjective enough in mood or simple enough in expression to be a great lyric poet. On the other hand, Arnold's profound subjectivity, his intense sensibility of his own moods, and his ability to give them expression in language so free from taint or flaw that it seems the direct utterance of the soul, were natural qualifications for a place among the master-lyrists of our language higher than has yet been awarded to him—perhaps higher than he ever in reality attained.

One or two characteristics are yet to be noticed before we close this study. It is impossible to do justice to Arnold without taking into account the uniform excellence of his work. How much is there of some of our greatest poets, Wordsworth, for instance, and Browning, that might, with no loss to their fame, be omitted altogether from a consideration of their work? But if we set aside the unfortunate *Merope*, and one or two shorter poems, what is there in Arnold that can be omitted without positive loss? One can understand a meaning beneath Arnold's laughing answer, when asked to make a selection from his poems, "I would like to choose them all."

Closely connected with this characteristic is the uniform excellence of the single poems. Sometimes, but rarely, we find purple patches upon a mantle of hodden-gray; but, as a rule, each poem



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maintains throughout an even excellence of style. And at its highest how pure and noble is this style of Arnold's! He said of Wordsworth that, at his best, Nature seemed to take the pen and write for him. No higher praise could be given to a poet, and no truer praise to much of Arnold's own poetry. Doubtless this instinct for chastely finished work, which preserved him alike from the too frequent redundancies of Tennyson, and the too startling eccentricities of Browning, was due to the influence of his classical studies, but it is none the less notable and worthy of high praise.

One specially characteristic feature of Arnold's poetry is his treatment of nature. Since Cowper's day, all great English poets have been nature lovers. Even Browning, whose stress lay upon the incidents in the development of the soul of man, illumines his dramatic poetry with sudden pictures of the external world that show him to have been a penetrating observer and a passionate lover of nature. The poetry of Tennyson, the great master of the idyllic school, is steeped in a sensuous enjoyment of nature in all her aspects. In Arnold, too, there is this ever-present love of nature, but with a difference. He does not, like Browning, turn to nature to illustrate the life of man, nor does he, like Tennyson, steep his senses in nature for sheer delight in her visible beauty. His relation to the natural world is like that of Wordsworth, a moral relation.

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But here, again, we must distinguish. Wordsworth sought in nature the inspiration without which man's life was stale, flat, unprofitable. To him the universe was governed by laws, not only mighty, but everlastingly righteous. The man who could penetrate through the superficial aspects of the visible world to grasp these laws, and who, having grasped them, could shape his own life in accordance with them, had learned, in Wordsworth's judgment, the secret of life. Arnold, on the other hand, draws a sharp distinction between man and nature. At times, even, as in the sonnet, *In Harmony with Nature*, he contrasts the two as opposing and almost hostile forces ;

“Nature is cruel, man is sick of blood ;  
Nature is stubborn, man would fain adore.”

This, to be sure, is an unusual view with Arnold. But it is only an exaggeration of his constantly maintained distinction between the world of natural phenomena and the world of man's life and thought. In one of his most thoughtful poems, *Morality*, he represents nature as admiring and applauding “the divine strife,” “the severe earnest air” of man. As a rule, however, he conceives of nature as apart from and indifferent to man ;

“The world which was ere I was born,  
The world which lasts when I am dead ;

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Which never was the friend of *one*,  
Nor promised love it could not give,  
But lit for all its generous sun,  
And lived itself, and made us live."

Yet Arnold is not indifferent to nature because nature is indifferent to him. On the contrary he finds in the contemplation of nature the attainment, temporary to be sure, but still the attainment of what with all his soul he most desires—calm. And hence it comes that he turns again and again to the more tranquil and soothing aspects of the world about him, to the peaceful beauty of the English country-side, to the quiet flow of a great river towards its final home, and, most of all, to

"The night in her silence,  
The stars in their calm."

It has been said that Arnold regarded nature as a sedative, an anodyne. Such a statement is one of the half-truths of criticism which, while not without a basis of fact, are responsible in the end for a wholly wrong impression. It is true that Arnold turns with a profound sense of relief from the weariness, the fever, and the fret of human life to the calm, untroubled world of nature. But he by no means used nature as a drug to deaden his senses. The contemplation of nature was to him rather a bath that at once cleansed him from the dust and stains of conflict, and sent him out

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refreshed and strengthened to face the world again. It is worth recalling the fact that Arnold was a very hard working man. By far the greater part of his poetry was composed during the twenty years that he served as an inspector of British schools, hurrying from town to town, for long years without a resting-place that he could call his home, constantly engaged in the mind and soul destroying task of reading examination papers, and fighting, like Paul at Ephesus, against the wild beasts of English ignorance, obstinacy, and Philistinism. It is no wonder that he turned from such a battle to seek the consolations of nature. The wonderful and laudable thing is that he always went back to the battle again.

And this brings us to the last and noblest characteristic of Arnold's poetry; its essentially manly tone and temper. Arnold has not the strong and happy optimism of Browning nor the deeply emotional hopefulness of Tennyson. More a child of his age than either of these great contemporaries, he reflected, as neither of them did, the prevailing spirit of his time. It is for this that superficial critics call him a poet of doubt and despair. Of doubt he is in a sense a poet, inasmuch as he gives utterance to the thought of his age, but never of despair. The vigorous teachers of his youth—Goethe, Wordsworth, his own father—forbade such mental cowardice. And Arnold was at heart a deeply religious nature, not a mystic, not

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an enthusiast, but one whose religion was embraced in the word, conduct. If he laid aside much of the armor of faith worn by his ancestors, it was only to fight more freely in the lighter gear.

“Hath man no second life?—*Pitch this one high!*  
Sits there no judge in Heaven, our sin to see?—  
*More strictly, then, the inward judge obey!*  
Was Christ a man like us? *Ah! let us try*  
*If we then, too, can be such men as he!*”

On the whole, and in spite of occasional traces of weakness, the dominant note of Arnold's poetry is one of steadfast, almost stoical, endurance of present evils, not without gleams of hope in a future deliverance,

“Still nursing the unconquerable hope,  
Still clutching the inviolable shade.”

Like Tennyson he trusted that somehow good would be the final goal of ill. But unlike Tennyson he was not content to rest in a vague “somehow.” The goal, he held, must be attained by man's own conscious effort; and to Arnold's mind the task, though attended by disheartening difficulties, was not impossible. In lines which may be regarded as closing his poetic career, he pictures the typical figure of an age of doubt and despair prophesying the coming of a new and better day.

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“What though there still need effort, strife?  
Though much be still unwon?  
Yet warm it mounts, the hour of life!  
Death's frozen hour is done!

The world's great order dawns in sheen,  
After long darkness rude,  
Divinelier imaged, clearer seen,  
With happier zeal pursued.”

Arnold himself found salvation in a gospel of morality touched by the emotion of poetry, and he looked forward to a time when all the world would listen to this gospel and find in it

“One common wave of thought and joy  
Lifting mankind again.”

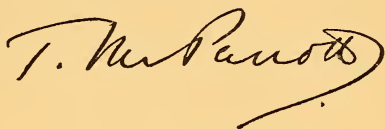
That his creed seems heterodox to many, perhaps to most, in our day as in his own, does not alter the fact that he believed in it as a means of escape from the deadening influences of the world, and that so believing he sorrowed not as one that has no hope. It is not what he believed, but the fact that he believed, that constitutes the moral and spiritual value of Arnold's work.

Enough has been said to justify the assertion that Matthew Arnold may justly claim a place among the greater Victorian poets—if hardly the equal of Tennyson or Browning, yet in the same class with them. Indeed it seems impossible not to believe that a poet of such grace and purity, of such high artistic ideals and achieve-

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ments, of such moral dignity and manly fortitude, will not be recognized more and more clearly with the years that make impartial judgment possible as one of the great masters in the broad and lovely realm of English poetry.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "T. W. Parsons". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.





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# Critical Comment

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# Critical Comment

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## THE VICTORIAN AGE

*Frederic Harrison*

That which in England is conveniently described as the Victorian Age of literature has a character of its own, at once brilliant, diverse, and complex. It is an age peculiarly difficult to label in a phrase ; but its copious and versatile gifts will make it memorable in the history of modern civilisation. The Victorian Age, it is true, has no Shakespeare or Milton, no Bacon or Hume, no Fielding or Scott—no supreme master in poetry, philosophy, or romance, whose work is incorporated with the thought of the world, who is destined to form epochs and to endure for centuries. Its genius is more scientific than literary, more historical than dramatic, greater in discovery than in abstract thought.

In lyric poetry and in romance our age has names second only to the greatest ; its researches into nature and history are at least equal to those of any previous epoch ; and if it has not many great philosophers, it has developed the latest, most arduous, most important of all the sciences. This is the age of Sociology ; its central achievement has been the revelation of social laws. This social aspect of thought colors the poetry, the romance, the literature, the art, and the philosophy

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of the Victorian Age. Literature has been the gainer thereby in originality and in force. It has been the loser in symmetry, in dignity, in grace.



### TENNYSON

*Richard Holt Hutton*

I suppose it is in some respects this lavish strength of what may be called the bodily element in poetry, as distinguished from the spiritual life and germ of it, which has given Lord Tennyson at once his delight in great variety and richness of materials, and his profound reverence for the principle of spiritual order which can alone impress unity and purpose on the tropical luxuriance of natural gifts. It is obvious, for instance, that even in relation to natural scenery, what his poetical faculty delights in most are rich, luxuriant landscapes in which either Nature or man has accumulated a lavish variety of effects. There is nothing of Wordsworth's passion for the bare, wild scenery of the rugged North in his poems. For one picture of wild and barren grandeur like the first of the two following in *The Palace of Art*, there are at least fifty variations on the last, in his various poems :

“And one, a foreground black with stones and slags,  
Beyond, a line of heights, and higher  
All barr'd with long white cloud the scornful crags,  
And highest, snow and fire.

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And one, an English home—gray twilight pour'd  
On dewy pastures, dewy trees,  
Softer than sleep—all things in order stored,  
A haunt of ancient Peace."

It is in the scenery of the mill, the garden, the chase, the down, the rich pastures, the harvest-field, the palace pleasure grounds, the Lord of Burleigh's fair domains, the luxuriant sylvan beauty bearing testimony to the careful hand of man, "the summer crisp with shining woods," that Tennyson most delights. If he strays to rarer scenes it is almost always in search of richer and more luxuriant loveliness, like the tropical splendours of *Enoch Arden* and the enervating skies which cheated the Lotos-Eaters of their longing for home. There is always complexity in the beauty which fascinates Lord Tennyson most.

And with the love of complexity comes, as a matter of course, in a born artist the love of the ordering faculty which can give unity and harmony to complexity of detail. Measure and order are for Tennyson of the very essence of beauty. His strong fascination for the Arthurian legends results no doubt from the mixture, in the moral materials of the age of chivalry, of exuberant stateliness and rich polish with the imperious need for spiritual order to control the dangerous elements of the period. His Arthurian epic is a great attempt to depict the infusion of a soul into a chaos of stately passions. Even in relation to

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modern politics you always see the same bias, a love of rich constitutional traditions welded together and ruled by wise forethought and temperate judgment. He cannot endure either spasmodic violence on the one hand, or bald simplicity on the other. What he loves is a land

“Where Freedom broadens slowly down  
From precedent to precedent.”

In *In Memoriam* he goes out of his way to condemn French political anarchy—

“The schoolboy heat,  
The blind hysterics of the Celt—”

and to throw scorn on the “red fool-fury of the Seine.” Still more curious is the parenthetic question, interpolated almost angrily, in the opening of an exquisite love poem, *Love and Duty* :—

“O shall the braggart shout  
For some blind glimpse of freedom, work itself  
*Through madness, hated by the wise, to law,  
System, and empire ?*”

—as if he grudged revolutionary energy even its occasional success. Never was any cry more absurd than the cry made against *Maud* for the sympathy it was supposed to show with hysterical passion. What it *was* meant to be, and what it was, though inadequately—the failure being due, not to sympathy with hysterics, but to the zeal

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with which Tennyson strove to caricature hysterics—was an exposure of hysterics. The love of measure and order is as visible in Tennyson's pictures of character as in every other aspect of his poetry. His *St. Simeon Stylites* is his hostile picture of the fanatic, just as his *Ulysses* is his friendly picture of the insatiable craving for new experience, enterprise, and adventure, when under the control of a luminous reason and a self-controlled will.



### BROWNING

*Algernon Charles Swinburne*

The charge of obscurity is perhaps of all charges the likeliest to impair the fame or to imperil the success of a rising or an established poet. It is as often misapplied by hasty or ignorant criticism as any other on the roll of accusations; and was never misapplied more persistently and perversely than to an eminent writer of our own time. The difficulty found by many in certain of Mr. Browning's works arises from a quality the very reverse of that which produces obscurity properly so called. Obscurity is the natural product of turbid forces and confused ideas; of a feeble and clouded or of a vigorous but unfixed and chaotic intellect. . . . Now, if there is any great quality more perceptible than another in Mr. Browning's intellect it is his decisive and incisive faculty of thought,

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his sureness and intensity of perception, his rapid and trenchant resolution of aim. To charge him with obscurity is about as accurate as to call Lynceus purblind or complain of the sluggish action of the telegraphic wire. He is something too much the reverse of obscure; he is too brilliant and subtle for the ready reader of a ready writer to follow with any certainty the track of an intelligence which moves with such incessant rapidity, or even to realize with what spider-like swiftness and sagacity his building spirit leaps and lightens to and fro and backward and forward as it lives along the animated line of its labor, springs from thread to thread and darts from centre to circumference of the glittering and quivering web of living thought woven from the inexhaustible stores of his perception and kindled from the inexhaustible fire of his imagination. He never thinks but at full speed; and the rate of his thought is to that of another man's as the speed of a railway to that of a wagon or the speed of a telegraph to that of a railway. It is hopeless to enjoy the charm or to apprehend the gist of his writings except with a mind thoroughly alert, an attention awake at all points, a spirit open and ready to be kindled by the contact of the writer's. To do justice to any book which deserves any other sort of justice than that of the fire or the waste paper basket, it is necessary to read it in the fit frame of mind; and the proper mood in



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which to study for the first time a book of Mr. Browning's is the freshest, clearest, most active mood of the mind in its brightest and keenest hours of work. . . . The action of so bright and swift a spirit gives insight as it were to the eyes and wings to the feet of our own; the reader's apprehension takes fire from the writer's, and he catches from a subtler and more active mind the infection of spiritual interest; so that any candid and clear-headed student finds himself able to follow for the time in fancy the lead of such a thinker with equal satisfaction on any course of thought or argument; when he sets himself to refute Renan through the dying lips of St. John or to try conclusions with Strauss in his own person, and when he flashes at once the whole force of his illumination full upon the inmost thought and mind of the most infamous criminal, a Guido Franceschini or a Louis Bonaparte, compelling the black and obscene abyss of such a spirit to yield up at last the secret of its profoundest sophistries, and let forth the serpent of a soul that lies coiled under the most intricate and supple reasonings of self-justified and self-conscious crime. And thanks to this very quality of vivid spiritual illumination, we are able to see by the light of the author's mind without being compelled to see with his eyes, or with the eyes of the living mask which he assumes for his momentary impersonation of saint or sophist,

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philosopher or malefactor ; without accepting one conclusion, conceding one point, or condoning one crime. It is evident that to produce any such effect requires above all things brightness and decision as well as subtlety and pliancy of genius ; and this is the supreme gift and distinctive faculty of Mr. Browning's mind.



ARNOLD

*Matthew Arnold*

My poems represent, on the whole, the main movement of mind of the last quarter of a century ; and thus they will probably have their day as people become conscious to themselves of what that movement of mind is, and interested in the literary productions that reflect it. It might be fairly urged that I have less poetical sentiment than Tennyson, and less intellectual vigour and abundance than Browning ; yet because I have, perhaps, more of a fusion of the two than either of them, and have more regularly applied that fusion to the main line of modern development, I am likely enough to have my turn as they have had theirs.

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# TYPICAL POEMS

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## TENNYSON

The arrangement is chronological, and by reading the poems in the order given some idea may be gained of the immense growth of the poet's mind and the steady perfection of his art in breadth and freedom.

*Mariana*

*Recollections of the Arabian Nights*

*The Lady of Shalott*

*Enone*

*The Palace of Art*

*The Lotos-Eaters*

*A Dream of Fair Women*

*The Two Voices*

*Dora*

*The Gardener's Daughter*

*Ulysses*

*Locksley Hall*

*Songs from The Princess*

*In Memoriam*

*Maud*

*Elaine*

*Guinevere*

*The Passing of Arthur*

*Northern Farmer—Old Style*

*The Revenge*

*Rizpah*

*Despair*

*The Ancient Sage*

*Locksley Hall Sixty Years After*

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*Vastness*  
*Merlin and the Gleam*  
*Crossing the Bar*  
*Akbar's Dream*

### BROWNING

The arrangement here is also chronological.

*Johannes Agricola in Meditation*  
*Pippa Passes*  
*Cavalier Tunes*  
*My Last Duchess*  
*In a Gondola*  
*The Bishop Orders his Tomb at Saint*  
*Praxed's Church*  
*The Lost Leader*  
*Home-Thoughts, from Abroad*  
*Christmas-Eve and Easter-Day*  
*Saul*  
*Evelyn Hope*  
*By the Fireside*  
*An Epistle of Karshish, the Arab*  
*Physician*  
*"Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came"*  
*The Statue and the Bust*  
*The Last Ride Together*  
*Andrea del Sarto*  
*Holy-Cross Day*  
*The Guardian-Angel*  
*Cleon*  
*One Word More*

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*Too Late*

*Abt Vogler*

*Rabbi Ben Ezra*

*Caliban upon Setebos*

*Confessions*

*Prospice*

*Apparent Failure*

From *The Ring and the Book*

*Giuseppe Caponsacchi*

*Pompilia*

*The Pope*

From *Fifine at the Fair*

*Amphibian*

*The Householder*

*Pheidippides*

*Halbert and Hob*

*Never the Time and the Place*

*Summum Bonum*

*A Pearl, A Girl*

*Epilogue to Asolando*

### ARNOLD

The arrangement, except in the case of the sonnets, is chronological.

Sonnets—

*Shakespeare*

*East London*

*The Better Part*

*The Good Shepherd with the Kid*

*Mycerinus*

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*The Church of Bron* (at least Part III)  
*Requiescat*  
*Youth and Calm*  
*The New Sirens*  
*Resignation*  
*Sohrab and Rustum*  
*The Sick King in Bokhara*  
*Tristram and Iseult* (at least parts I and III)  
*The Forsaken Merman*  
*Switzerland*  
*Faded Leaves*  
*Dover Beach*  
*The Last Word*  
*Self-Dependence*  
*A Summer Night*  
*A Wish*  
*The Scholar-Gipsy*  
*Thyrsis*  
*Memorial Verses*  
*Rugby Chapel*  
*Heine's Grave*  
*Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse*  
*Stanzas in Memory of the Author of*  
*Obermann*  
*Obermann Once More*  
*Empedocles on Etna* (at least the songs)  
*Westminster Abbey*  
*Geist's Grave*

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# Stimulative Questions

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These questions are framed with the sole purpose of enabling the reader to apprehend more clearly the important points in the books presented in this course. They are not "catch questions," nor are they mere tests of the memory. They are, to borrow an old title, "*Aids to Reflection*." The method which the reader should follow in using these questions may perhaps best be left to himself. An excellent plan would be to read the books first with no reference to the questions; then, taking up the questions, to try how far memory and judgment will go toward answering them; and finally, with the questions in mind, to refer once more to the books, and freshen, correct, and fill up the ideas which the questions are intended to suggest. To get the greatest possible advantage from the course it would be well to write out the conclusions reached by such a method in a note-book, along with any original ideas that the reading and the questions may have suggested. Such a note-book should be preserved, for it will have permanent value to its owner, not alone as a record of reading, but as a memorial of a certain stage in the development of his taste and judgment.





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## STIMULATIVE QUESTIONS

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### VICTORIAN POETS

1. What influence did the scientific spirit exert on poetry in the Victorian era?
2. In what sense was the Victorian era an age of transition?
3. In what sense was Landor a pioneer of Victorian poetry? What are his chief poetic qualities? Point out his limitations.
4. What are some of the limitations and defects of Arnold's poetry? What are its finer characteristics? What is Arnold's most ideal trait?
5. What influence did Mrs. Browning's early studies have upon her poetic work? How was her work influenced by her marriage? What are the finest traits of her poetry?
6. In what respect is Tennyson the most representative poet of his age?
7. Trace the development of Tennyson's genius from 1830 to the completion of *The Idyls of the King*.
8. What are the most salient characteristics of Tennyson's genius? What are his most marked limitations?
9. What are the most notable groups, or schools, among the minor poets of the Victorian era? What influences were predominant among them?
10. What does Mr. Stedman say as to Browning's dramatic gift, method of expression, and moral tone?
11. What are the chief merits and defects of Browning's dramatic lyrics?

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12. Can any change be noted between Mr. Stedman's attitude toward Browning in his first criticism of him (chap. IX, sec. VIII) and his later estimate (Supplementary Review, sec. II)? If so, does the change imply error or inconsistency?

13. What are the chief characteristics of Rossetti's work? Why did he exert so great an influence upon younger poets?

14. What is the chief merit of Swinburne's work? What moral questions were raised by the appearance of his *Poems and Ballads*? What judgment may be passed on his dramatic works?

### THE POETRY OF TENNYSON

1. What are the special characteristics of Tennyson's early verse? What characteristic of the poet's genius is shown by his revision of *The Palace of Art*?

2. What points of similarity can be discovered between the life and work of Milton and Tennyson? In what points did they differ? Which are the essentials, the similarities or the differences?

3. What are the chief defects and merits of *The Princess*? What are the most striking characteristics of the hero in *Maud*? What is the twofold character of *In Memoriam*? How does the analysis of the poem bring out this double character?

4. In what order were *The Idyls of the King* composed? Why are they called idyls? How can Tennyson's modernization of the spirit of the legend be justified? What are the dominant idea and the cardinal defect of the *Idyls* taken as a whole?

5. What reasons seem to have dictated Tennyson's choice of subjects for his historical plays?

## THE GREATER VICTORIAN POETS

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6. In what cardinal points do Tennyson's religious ideas agree with the teachings of the Bible?

7. What charge is commonly brought against *Locksley Hall Sixty Years After*? How does Dr. Van Dyke attempt to defend the poet? Is his defence successful?

8. In conclusion, what conception of Tennyson as a poet and thinker did you obtain from this book? Does it agree with your preconceived ideas of Tennyson? Do your readings of Tennyson strengthen or weaken this conception?

9. How does Mr. Stedman's critical treatment of Tennyson differ from Dr. Van Dyke's? Does the comparison between Tennyson and Theocritus seem to you more or less apt than the comparison between Tennyson and Milton?

### LIFE AND LETTERS OF ROBERT BROWNING

1. What influences were exerted upon Browning by heredity and early environment?

2. What early signs of poetic genius did he show? What poets influenced his early work? Was this influence permanent?

3. What are the most striking poetic qualities in *Pauline*? What was the poet's aim in writing *Paracelsus*? How was this poem received by the literary world?

4. Under what circumstances were *Strafford* and *A Blot in the 'Scutcheon* composed and acted? What were the causes of their slight success?

5. What may be said of the character and style of *Sordello*?

## THE BOOKLOVERS READING CLUB

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6. What remarkable plays and poems appeared in *Bells and Pomegranates*? What is the significance of the title? How was the series received by the public?

7. Under what circumstances did Browning make the acquaintance of Miss Barrett? What was the cause of their secret marriage? What report do her letters give of their married life? What was Browning's opinion of his wife's poetic genius?

8. What does Mrs. Orr say as to the religious tone of *Christmas-Eve and Easter-Day*? Does your own knowledge of these poems confirm or reject her view?

9. What poems of a more or less personal character appeared in Browning's work during his married life?

10. Where did Browning get the material for *The Ring and the Book*? In what way did his wife's character influence his treatment of Pompilia? How was this poem received by the public?

11. How did Browning come to write *La Saisiaz*? What does Mrs. Orr say as to its relation to Christian doctrine? Does your knowledge of the poem confirm or reject her view?

12. What new departure in Browning's poetic method is marked by the appearance of *Dramatic Idyls*?

13. What was Browning's relation to the Browning Society? What influence did the society have on the public?

14. What were the most striking personal characteristics of Browning?

15. What do you think of Mrs. Orr's book as a biography? Can you point out any faults of style and composition? Is her attitude toward the poet satisfactory? What do you think of her tone toward his religious ideas?

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# Topics *for* Special Papers

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## VICTORIAN POETRY

1. General characteristics of Victorian poetry.
2. A contrast between Victorian and Elizabethan poetry.
3. The relation of Victorian poetry to that of Wordsworth and his contemporaries.
4. The drama in Victorian poetry.
5. The epic, or narrative, in Victorian poetry.
6. Victorian lyric poetry.

## TENNYSON

7. Tennyson's treatment of the Arthurian legends.
8. Tennyson's belief in immortality.
9. Tennyson as a poet of nature.
10. Tennyson's women.
11. Tennyson and Browning; a comparison and contrast.

## BROWNING

12. Browning as a poet of love.
13. Browning's women.
14. Browning's poems on music and art.
15. Browning's dramatic method.
16. A comparison of *Rabbi Ben Ezra* with the *Rubaiyat* of Omar Khayyam.
17. Browning and the Christian religion.

## ARNOLD

18. Arnold's elegies.
19. The classical element in Arnold's poetry.
20. The moral element in Arnold's poetry.
21. Arnold's treatment of nature.
22. Arnold as the poet of religious doubt.

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## Topics *for* Open Discussion

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1. Is the Victorian age likely to be as famous in the history of English poetry as that of Elizabeth or that of the French Revolution?

2. Is the popular estimate of Tennyson well founded?

3. In what form of poetry—dramatic, epic, or lyric—have the Victorian poets been most successful?

4. On what will the fame of Tennyson permanently rest—on his artistic perfections or on the ideas embodied in his poetry?

5. What is Tennyson's relation to revealed religion?

6. Is Browning an obscure poet?

7. What is the chief difficulty in reading Browning?

8. Would Browning under happier circumstances have become a great dramatist?

9. Is Browning's fame likely to increase or lessen in the coming century?

10. What right has Arnold to be grouped among the greater Victorian poets?

11. Is Arnold's poetry likely to outlive his prose?

12. Can any other poet of the Victorian era be ranked with Tennyson, Browning, and Arnold?

13. Which of the younger Victorian poets—Rossetti, Morris, or Swinburne—has exerted the strongest influence upon his contemporaries?

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# Supplementary Reading

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## VICTORIAN POETRY

There is no satisfactory history of Victorian literature as a whole. The handbooks by Mrs. Oliphant, *The Victorian Age of English Literature*, and Professor Saintsbury, *Victorian Literature*, contain a large amount of not always accurate information and a little criticism of the subjective sort. Professor Walker's "*The Age of Tennyson* (1830-1870) is perhaps more satisfactory than either of these; and his *Greater Victorian Poets* (Tennyson, Browning, and Arnold) is an interesting work of appreciative, if not very original or stimulating criticism. Miss Sharp's little handbook, *Victorian Poets*, avoids the error of trying to say too much and concentrates attention on the most important figures of the era. There are some interesting chapters on the Victorian poets in Dawson's *Makers of Modern Poetry*. The last chapters of Miss Scudder's book, *The Life of the Spirit in the Modern English Poets*, contain some suggestive criticisms on the Victorians and a stimulating comparison of their spiritual ideals with those of their predecessors, the poets of the Revolution.

A good selection of poems by the minor Victorian poets may be found in Stedman's *Victorian Anthology* or in Palgrave's *Golden Treasury of Songs*, second series.

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### TENNYSON

Alfred, Lord Tennyson: A Memoir. By Hallam Tennyson.

This is the standard and authoritative biography of Tennyson. It is extremely interesting and valuable, but only as a biography. It makes no attempt at anything like a critical estimate of the poet's work, but it contains some very interesting bits of criticism by the poet himself.

Memories of the Tennysons. By Canon Rawnsley.

A charming collection of reminiscences and anecdotes.

Alfred, Lord Tennyson: A Study of His Life and Work. By Arthur Waugh.

As its name indicates, this book is a mixture of biography and criticism. It is interesting, but not particularly illuminating.

Tennyson: His Homes, His Friends, and His Work. By Elizabeth L. Cary.

This handsome gift book includes, in addition to an outline of the poet's life, a collection of critical estimates of his work.

Tennyson: His Art and Relation to Modern Life. By Stopford A. Brooke.

This is probably the best of all critical studies of Tennyson. The standpoint is that of an admiring, but not adoring, exponent of the work of a great



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poet. Mr. Brooke is one of the most keen-sighted and appreciative of English critics, as is abundantly shown by the inestimable study of Shelley prefixed to his selection from that poet's work in the Golden Treasury series; and he knows his English poets too well to render to Tennyson the exclusive homage so customary among the middle and later Victorian critics. But he does ample justice to the charm and perfection of Tennyson's art. It is perhaps too much to say that we have in this book the final estimate of Tennyson's work; but one might hazard the guess that when the final estimate appears it will not be essentially other than what is contained here.

### Tennyson: A Critical Study. By Stephen Gwynn.

This not exactly profound work is interesting as showing the distinct reaction against the predominance of Tennyson which has set in since the poet's death.

### Alfred Tennyson. By Andrew Lang.

This brief sketch of Tennyson's life is founded upon the *Memoir*, by Hallam Tennyson. The critical opinions are Mr. Lang's own and are always interesting. Mr. Lang proclaims himself a Tennysonian, and frankly avows his disagreement with much of the latest criticism of the poet.

### The Mind of Tennyson. By E. Hershey Sneath.

This is a careful and impartial attempt to "interpret and systematize Tennyson's thoughts on God, freedom and immortality." The point of view is that of the philosopher rather than the literary critic.

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Among the numberless essays on the poetry of Tennyson one is deserving of especial mention, Professor Dowden's *Mr. Tennyson and Mr. Browning: A Comparative Study*. Although nearly a quarter of a century old, it remains today as fresh and full of vital truth as ever. Its presentation of the two poets as supplementary types of character and thought is one on which a great part of the criticism of today rests.

The reader may also be referred to the studies by R. H. Hutton, *Literary Essays*; Peter Bayne, *Lessons from My Masters*, and G. W. Cooke, *Poets and Problems*. Hippolyte Taine, in *English Literature* (book v, chapter vi), has written a stimulating critique on Tennyson from the French point of view. An admirable answer to it will be found in Swinburne's *Miscellanies* ("Tennyson and Musset").

### BROWNING

**Life of Browning.** Great Writers Series. By William Sharp.

This is a very readable little book combining a good account of Browning's life with some capital criticism of his work. In this latter respect, it is superior to the authorized biography by Mrs. Orr.

**Records of Tennyson, Ruskin, and Browning.** By Mrs Ritchie.

This entertaining book by the daughter of Thackeray contains some sixty pages of pleasant gossip about the Brownings.

## THE GREATER VICTORIAN POETS

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Robert Browning: Personalialia. By Edmund Gosse.

Mr. Gosse has reprinted in this little book an article of his on "The Early Career of Robert Browning," which attracted much attention at the time of its first appearance. It was "inspired and partly dictated, was revised and approved of" by the poet himself. To this article the author has added a few pages of "Personal Impressions," not without value as giving some definite image of Browning, the man.

Robert Browning, the Poet and the Man.  
By Elizabeth L. Cary.

This book, a companion to the compilation on Tennyson by the same author, mentioned above (page 140), is hardly so satisfactory a work. It contains, however, an outline of the poet's life and some rather interesting critical extracts.

Letters of Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett. Edited by R. B. Browning.

A great storm was raised a few years ago over the publication by Robert Barrett Browning of the letters that had passed between his parents during their courtship and secret engagement. Waiving discussion of the ethics or good taste of the publication of these letters, it is impossible for the student of Browning to let them pass unread. They contain not only a record, perfect in every detail, of one of the strongest, sweetest, and purest passions of literary history, but also an insight into the mind and heart of the poet such as nothing else affords.

The Letters of Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

Edited by Frederic G. Kenyon.

These letters, arranged in chronological order by the editor, are joined together by links of narrative, thus forming an almost continuous record of Mrs. Browning's life. Over half the letters belong to the period of her married life and are naturally full of allusions to her poet husband.

There is, unfortunately, no satisfactory critical estimate of Robert Browning's poetic genius and accomplishment. A great number of books (most of them quite worthless) have been written about his work. Possibly the best study of Browning from the esthetic side is contained in Arthur Symonds' *Introduction to the Study of Browning*. Professor Jones' *Browning as a Philosophical and Religious Teacher* is by far the best book on Browning as a thinker, but it is at times rather difficult reading. Of introductions, handbooks, guide-books, etc., to the study of Browning there seems to be no end. The reader would do well to leave them carefully alone and read the poems themselves rather than books about the poet.

A few essays, however, may be mentioned as specimens of hostile or appreciative criticism: "Wordsworth, Tennyson, and Browning; or, Pure, Ornate, and Grotesque Art in English Poetry," by Walter Bagehot, in *Literary Studies*; "On the Alleged Obscurity of Mr. Browning's Poetry," by Augustine Birrell, in *Obiter Dicta*; "Robert

## THE GREATER VICTORIAN POETS

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Browning," by John Jay Chapman, in *Emerson and Other Essays*; "Mr. Browning," by R. H. Hutton, in *Literary Essays*; "*La renaissance de la poésie anglaise*," by Gabriel Sarrazin.

### ARNOLD

Matthew Arnold. By George Saintsbury.

This is by no means a satisfactory book, but it is the only biography of the poet in existence. The criticism contained in it is of very little value in itself, but it is the kind that leads the reader to take up the poems again—which is no bad result, after all, for criticism to accomplish.

Letters of Matthew Arnold. Edited by G. W. E. Russell.

These letters constitute one of the most entertaining collections of correspondence in English. They are of especial value as presenting a side of Arnold that hardly appears at all in his poems and essays—the domestic Arnold, kindly, gentle, home-loving, a devoted son, husband, and father, not far removed in his household life from that object of his life-long enmity, the British Philistine.

Thomas and Matthew Arnold. Great Educators Series. By Sir Joshua Fitch.

The last part of this little volume gives us a valuable account of Arnold's work in elevating the school system of England.

Among the numerous essays on Arnold, perhaps the very best is "The Poetry of Matthew

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Arnold," by R. H. Hutton, in *Literary Essays*. Mr. Birrell has a charming essay in *Res Judicatæ*, and the reader may also be referred to the essays by Professor Gates, in *Three Studies in Literature*, and Professor Woodberry, in *Makers of Literature*. Another interesting study is "Matthew Arnold," by J. M. Robertson, in *Modern Humanists*. Arnold has been so often attacked by the orthodox as an enemy of the faith that it is at least amusing to see with how much more bitterness he is assaulted in this essay by a thorough-going agnostic and socialist as a cowardly betrayer of the cause of progress.

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# Twenty-Five Reading Courses

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## No. 1—PROBLEMS IN MODERN DEMOCRACY

Among the contributors to the handbook accompanying this course are ex-President Cleveland; Woodrow Wilson, Professor of Politics, Princeton University; Henry J. Ford, author of *Rise and Growth of American Politics*; and Henry D. Lloyd, author of *Newest England*. The books for the course are selected by Mr. Cleveland.

## No. 2—MODERN MASTERS OF MUSIC

Among the contributors to the handbook accompanying this course are Reginald de Koven, Dr. W. S. B. Mathews, editor of *Music*; James G. Huneker, editor of *Musical Courier*; Henry E. Krehbiel, musical critic New York *Tribune*; and Gustave Kobbé, author of *Wagner's Life and Works*. The most attractive reading course ever offered to lovers of music.

## No. 3—RAMBLINGS AMONG ART CENTRES

Among the contributors to the handbook accompanying this course are F. Hopkinson Smith, Dr. John C. Van Dyke, Dr. John La Farge, President of the Society of American Artists; Kenyon Cox and Dr. Russell Sturgis. The handbook is attractively illustrated. Mr. Smith and Dr. Van Dyke are responsible for selecting the books to be read.

## No. 4—AMERICAN VACATIONS IN EUROPE

This course is the next best thing to going abroad oneself. Among the contributors to the handbook are Frank R. Stockton, Jeannette L. Gilder, editor of *The Critic*; Mrs. Schuyler Crowninshield and George Ade. The handbook has a fine portrait frontispiece.

## No. 5—A STUDY OF SIX NEW ENGLAND CLASSICS

The books for this course are selected by Dr. Edward Everett Hale. Among the contributors to the handbook are Dr. Hale, Julian Hawthorne, Mrs. James T. Fields and Dr. Edward Waldo Emerson. Dr. Emerson is a son of Ralph Waldo Emerson. This is one of the most attractive courses in the entire series.

## No. 6—SHAKESPEARE'S ENGLISH KINGS

The plays are selected for this course by H. Beerbohm Tree, the well-known English actor, and the books to be read in connection with the plays are selected by Sir Henry

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Irving. Among the other contributors to the handbook are Prof. Edward Dowden, acknowledged the greatest Shakespearean scholar of Great Britain, Dr. Hiram Corson, of Cornell University; Dr. William J. Rolfe and Dr. Hamilton W. Mabie. The handbook is very attractively illustrated.

### No. 7—CHARLES DICKENS: HIS LIFE AND WORK

Among the contributors to the delightful handbook accompanying this course are George W. Cable, the well-known novelist; Irving Bacheller, author of *Eben Holden*; Andrew Lang, the distinguished English writer; Amelia E. Barr, the novelist; and James L. Hughes, author of *Dickens as an Educator*. The books to be read are selected by Mr. Cable and Mr. Bacheller. The handbook is beautifully illustrated.

### No. 8—CHILD STUDY FOR MOTHERS AND TEACHERS

Among the contributors to the handbook accompanying this course are Margaret E. Sangster, Nora Archibald Smith, Anne Emilie Poulson, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Lucy Wheelock and Kate Gannett Wells. Mrs. Sangster selects the books to be read.

### No. 9—INDUSTRIAL QUESTIONS OF THE DAY

The following distinguished writers on economic problems contribute to the handbook accompanying this course: President Jacob Gould Schurman, of Cornell University; Jeremiah Whipple Jenks, Professor of Political Science, Cornell University; Richard Theodore Ely, Director of the School of Economics, Political Science and History, University of Wisconsin; Sidney Webb, Lecturer London School of Economics and Political Science, Member London County Council; and Carroll Davidson Wright, United States Commissioner of Labor.

### No. 10—FLORENCE IN ART AND LITERATURE

Among the contributors to the handbook accompanying this course are William Dean Howells, Dr. Russell Sturgis, Frank Preston Stearns, author of *Midsummer of Italian Art*, *Life of Tintoretto*, etc.; Dr. William Henry Goodyear, Curator Fine Arts Museum of Brooklyn Institute; and Lewis Frederick Pilcher, Professor of Art, Vassar College. The handbook has some attractive illustrations.

### No. 11—STUDIES OF EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS

The books have been selected specially for this course by the Rt. Hon. James Bryce, of the English House of Commons, and the Hon. Andrew D. White, United States Ambassador to Ger-



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many. Among the other contributors to the handbook are Jesse Macy, Professor of Constitutional History and Political Science, Iowa College; and John William Burgess, Professor of Political Science and Constitutional Law, and Dean of the Faculty of Political Science, Columbia University.

## NO. 12—FAMOUS WOMEN OF THE RENAISSANCE

Among the contributors to the handbook accompanying this course are Col. Thomas Wentworth Higginson, Margaret Deland and Charlotte Brewster Jordan. The handbook has several very interesting illustrations.

## NO. 13—THE MODERN CITY AND ITS PROBLEMS

Among the contributors to the handbook accompanying this course are Dr. Frederic W. Speirs; Dr. Albert Shaw, editor of *The Review of Reviews*; Bird S. Coler, Comptroller of the City of New York, author of *Municipal Government*; and Charles J. Bonaparte, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the National Municipal League. The books are selected by Dr. Speirs.

## NO. 14—STUDIES IN APPLIED ELECTRICITY

This is without exception the most attractive and the most helpful reading course ever offered to students of electricity. Thomas A. Edison selects the books specially for these studies. Among the other contributors to the handbook are Dr. Edwin J. Houston, Dr. Elihu Thomson, Carl Hering, Ex-President of the American Institute of Electrical Engineers; and Arthur V. Abbott, Chief Engineer of the Chicago Telephone Company.

## NO. 15—FIVE WEEKS' STUDY OF ASTRONOMY

Among the contributors to the handbook accompanying this course are Charles A. Young, Professor of Astronomy, Princeton University; Sir Robert S. Ball, Professor of Astronomy, Cambridge University, and Director of Cambridge Observatory, England; Camille Flammarion, founder of the Astronomical Society of France, and author of *Marvels of the Heavens, Astronomy, etc.*; George C. Comstock, Director of Washburn Observatory, University of Wisconsin; and Harold Jacoby, Professor of Astronomy, Columbia University. The study programme includes contributions from the most famous astronomers of England and France.

## NO. 16—RECENT ENGLISH DRAMATISTS

Lovers of the best modern dramas will find much pleasure in these studies. Among the contributors to the handbook are Brander Matthews, Professor of Literature, Columbia University;

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Dr. William Winter, Dramatic Critic for the New York *Tribune*; Dr. Harry Thurston Peck, Editor of *The Bookman*; Louise Chandler Moulton; and Norman Hapgood, the well-known writer of dramatic criticism. The handbook has some interesting illustrations.

### No. 17—STUDIES IN CURRENT RELIGIOUS THOUGHT

The books are chosen for the course by Dr. Lyman Abbott and Dr. Washington Gladden. Among the contributors to the handbook are Dr. Samuel D. McConnell, Rector of Holy Trinity Church, Brooklyn; President William DeWitt Hyde, of Bowdoin College; Dr. Amory H. Bradford, Editor of *The Outlook*; Dr. Henry Collin Minton, of San Francisco Theological Seminary, late Moderator of the Presbyterian General Assembly; Dr. H. W. Thomas, Pastor of the People's Church, Chicago; and Dr. Theodore T. Munger, Pastor of the United Congregational Church, New Haven. For clergymen and laymen who wish to stimulate the growth of a theology which is in harmony with the best thought of the time we recommend this handbook and this reading course.

### No. 18—THE GREATER VICTORIAN POETS

The books are selected for this course by Thomas Bailey Aldrich. Among the other contributors to the handbook are Thomas R. Lounsbury, Professor of English, Yale University; Dr. T. M. Parrott, of Princeton University; and Marie Ada Molineux, author of *The Phrase Book of Browning*.

### No. 19—OUT-OF-DOOR AMERICANS

Among the contributors to the handbook accompanying this course are John Burroughs, Ernest Seton-Thompson, President David Starr Jordan, of the Leland Stanford Junior University; Ernest Ingersoll and Hamlin Garland. Lovers of nature will find delight in the outlines and recommendations of this course.

### No. 20—THE WORLD'S GREAT WOMAN NOVELISTS

Mrs. Humphry Ward, the well-known English novelist, is the first contributor to the handbook accompanying this course. The other contributors are Elizabeth Stuart Phelps Ward, Mary E. Wilkins, Agnes Repplier, Katherine Lee Bates, Professor of English, Wellesley College; and Oscar Fay Adams. The handbook contains some interesting illustrations.

### No. 21—AMERICAN FOUNDATION HISTORY

Hon. Henry Cabot Lodge selects the books for this course. Among the other contributors are Albert Bushnell Hart, Professor of American History, Harvard University; John Bach

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McMaster, Professor of American History, University of Pennsylvania ; Reuben Gold Thwaites, Secretary of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, author of *The Colonies* ; Paul Leicester Ford, author of *Janice Meredith* ; and Andrew Cunningham McLaughlin, Professor of American History, University of Michigan.

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## No. 22—STUDIES IN AMERICAN LITERARY LIFE

Professor Barrett Wendell and Professor Lewis E. Gates, of Harvard, and Dr. Horace E. Scudder, late editor of *The Atlantic Monthly*, contribute to the handbook accompanying this course. For a brief stimulative and instructive course in American literature nothing better could possibly be offered.

## No. 23—STUDIES IN RECENT FRENCH FICTION

Alcée Fortier, Professor of Romance Languages, Tulane University of Louisiana, has chosen the books for this reading course. Among the contributors to the handbook are the three distinguished French writers, Edouard Rod, Ferdinand Brunetière and Paul Bourget, and the notable American critic, Dr. Benjamin W. Wells, author of *Modern French Literature* and *A Century of French Literature*.

## No. 24—THE ENGLISH BIBLE : HOW WE GOT IT

The contributors to this course include President William R. Harper, of the University of Chicago ; John Franklin Genung, Professor of Rhetoric, Amherst College ; William Newton Clarke, Professor of Christian Theology, Colgate University ; and Richard G. Moulton, Professor of English Literature, University of Chicago. The handbook is a very interesting and instructive volume in itself.

## No. 25—THE MECHANISM OF PRESENT DAY COMMERCE

*In Preparation.* The books are selected by the Hon. Lyman J. Gage, Secretary of the Treasury.















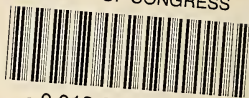
Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process  
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